THE MAG THAT'S LEAPS AND BOUNDS AHEAD!

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
NO. 41 JUNE 1987
£1



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Sweevo's back in

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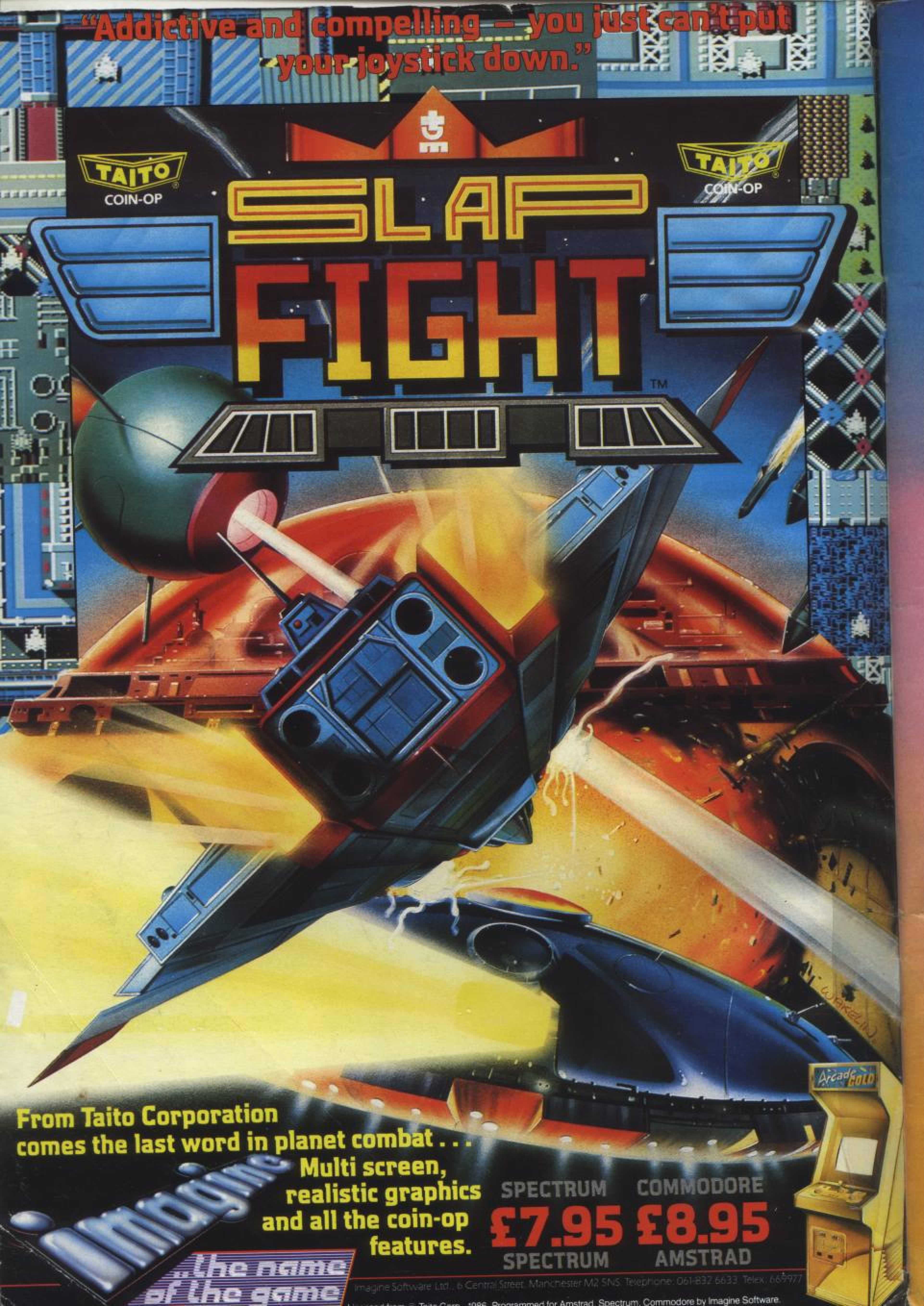
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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE 41 JUNE 1987

Editor
Roger Kean
Assistant Editor
Ciarán Brennan
Staff Writers
Lloyd Mangram, Richard Eddy, Ian Phillipson
Adventure Editor
Derek Brewster
Strategy Editor
Philippa Irving
Tech Tipster
Simon Goodwin
Contributing Writers
Jon Bates, Brendon Kavanagh, John Minson
Production Controller
David Western
Art Director
Gordon Druce
Illustrator
Oliver Frey
Production
Tony Lorton, Mark Kendrick, Tim Croton, Seb Clare
Process and Planning
Matthew Uffindell, Jonathan Rignall, Nick Orchard
Photography
Cameron Pound, Michael Parkinson
Advertisement Manager
Roger Bennett
Advertisement Assistant
Nick Wild
Subscriptions
Denise Roberts
Mail Order
Carol Kinsey

Editorial and Production
1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AQ
☎0584 5851
Mail Order and Subscriptions
PO Box 20, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB
☎0584 5620

ADVERTISING
Bookings
☎0584 4603 OR **0584 5852**

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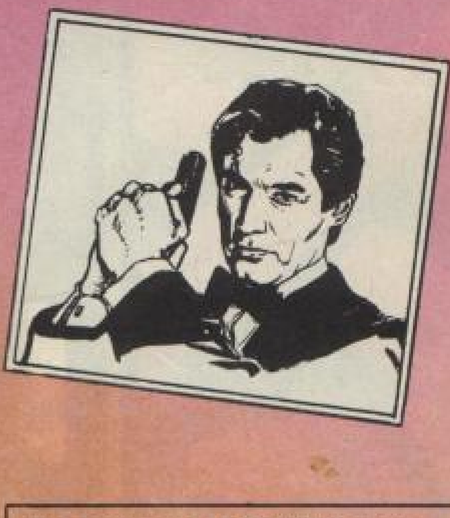
FEATURES



REGULARS

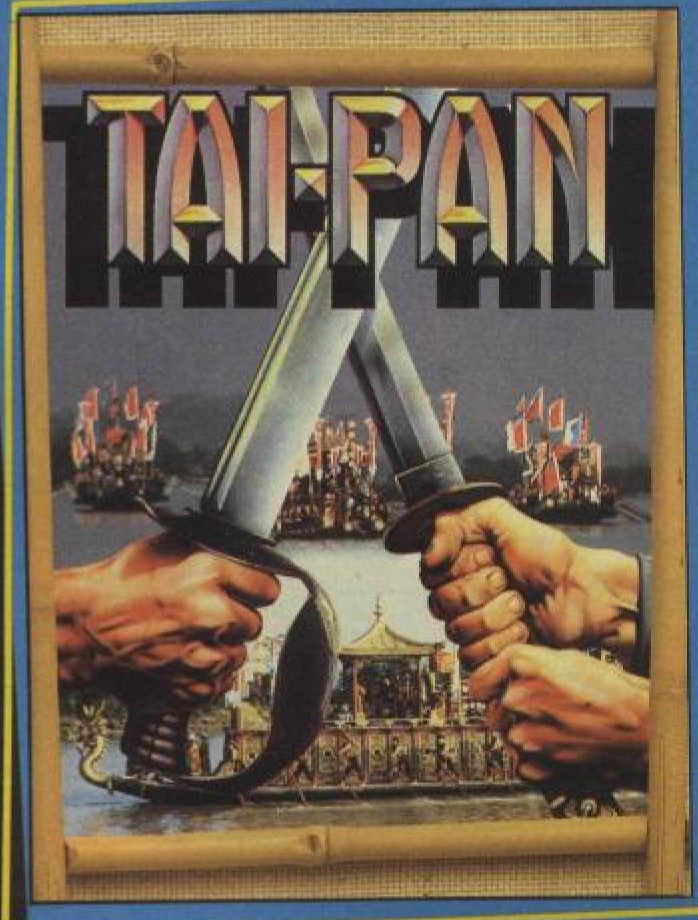


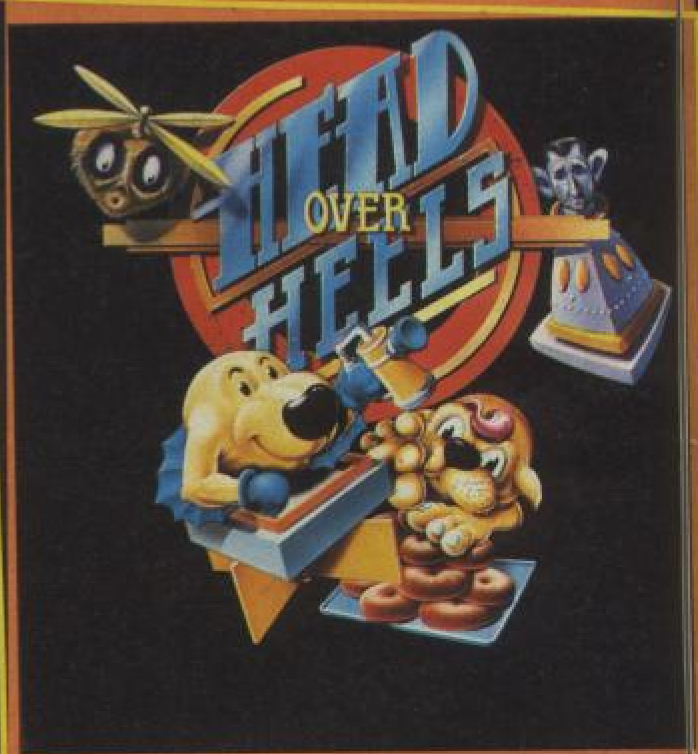
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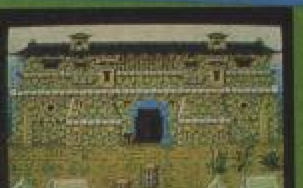


The next issue of CRASH is also a special one – we're giving away a free copy of the IPC comic OINK which has been specially commissioned for CRASH. Don't miss your copy – it goes on sale from 25 June. Offending non-buyers will be rooted out, grunted at and very probably cured and sold as prime back with the rind on.

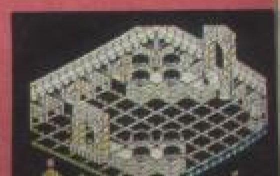
THE ART O







From the author of SHOGUN, James Clavell, comes **TAI PAN** and a terrific new game packed with action and stunning graphics. TAI PAN is the exciting story of a man and an island. Become Dirk Struan – a pirate, a smuggler, a manipulator of men achieving riches beyond imagination. Enter a world of blood, sin, treachery, conspiracy and murder – a game of Grand entertainment!



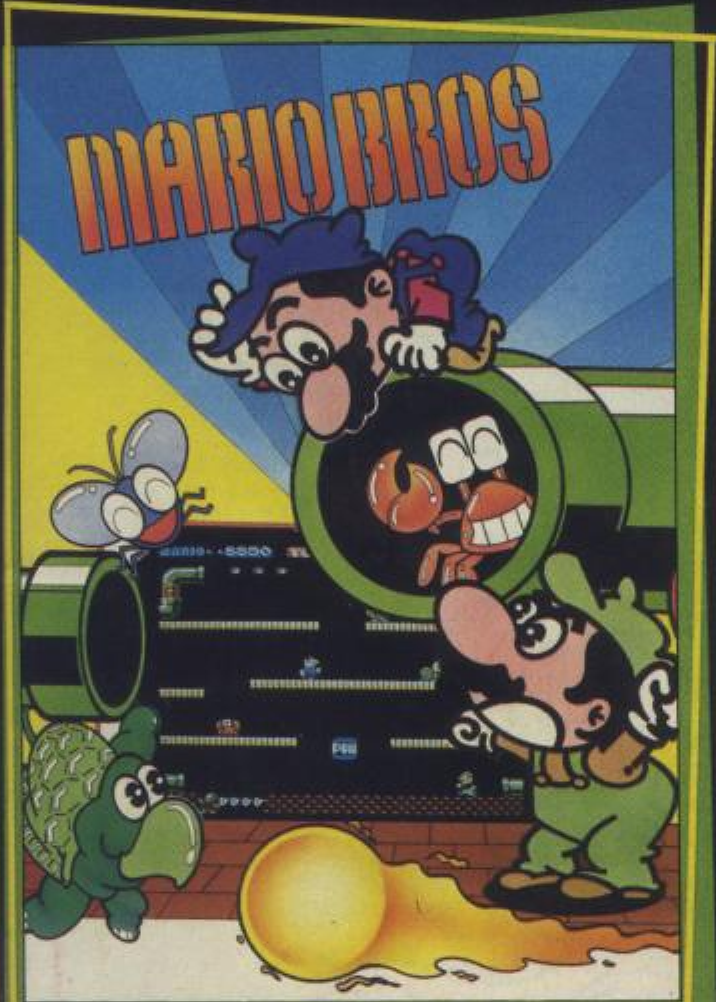
Authors of No. 1 Blockbuster, Batman, Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond present **'Head over Heels'** – Hi! My name's Mr. Head. Some say I'm the one with the brains but I don't think my flat footed friend would agree. I'm a real sharp shooter, but without my pal Mr. Heels I'd get nowhere fast . . . or slow! I can jump like a flea and even glide but Heels is the Daley Thompson of the two of us – he's FAST! Together, if we can find each other, we really do make an awesome twosome, and that's the only way we can overcome the emperor Blacktooth.

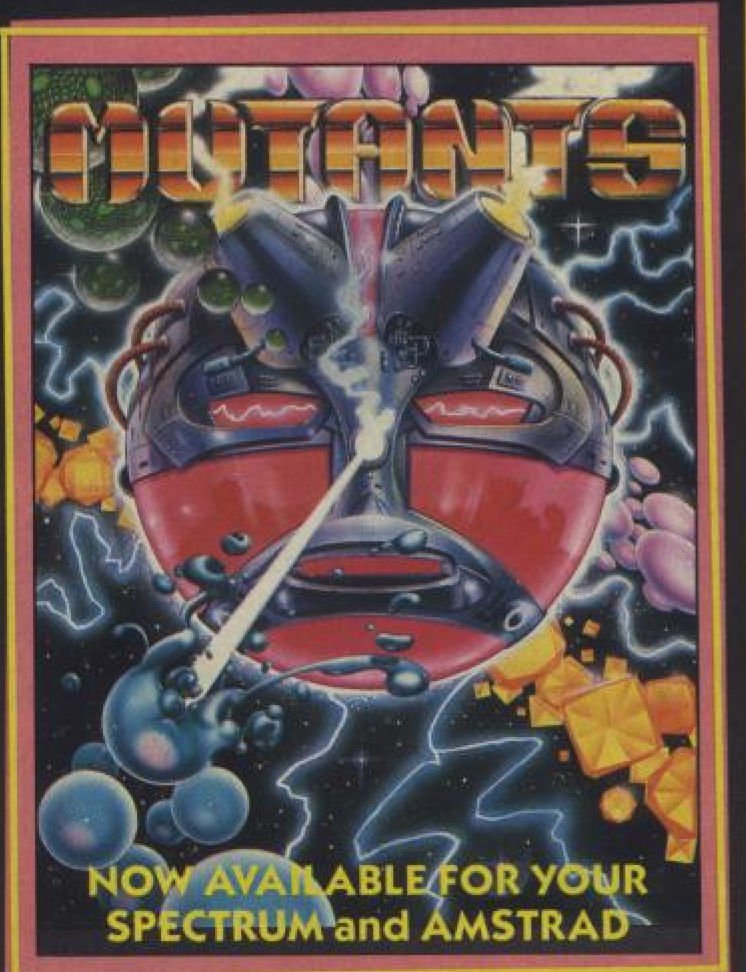
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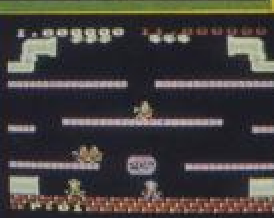
Screen shots taken from various computer formats.

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OF GAMES







Now hot from the arcades comes Nintendo's Mario Bros for your home computers featuring Fireballs, Sidestepper, Fighterfly and of course – Mario and Luigi! Flip those pests and kick 'em off the pipes, but don't lose your footing on those slippery floors. Play as a team or against each other; either way you're in for a scream with Mario and Luigi – the **MARIO BROS.**



I took on the Mutants knowing I was armed to the teeth with missiles, mines, torpedoes and more . . . I could even choose where I wanted to fight! How could I lose? . . . How DID I lose? I've never seen anything like it . . . they came at me in droves, in swirling gases, in forms spinning a deadly gossamer and there were more to come. I know now that one form of Mutant will never escape a well planned pattern of mines. It's just the beginning . . . but I must build the ultimate weapon or I'll NEVER be rid of them all! **"An essential purchase – miss it and you're missing something special" – Zzap**

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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM



Roger M Kean

LM CLOSES DOWN

A YEAR and two months ago, a brave experiment was formulated. The concept had been hovering for longer, but in the small Cornish fishing village of Mousehole (pronounced *Mow-zal*), the directors of Newsfield, who happened to be taking a working break there, committed the company to launching an entirely new type of youth magazine.

Fed up with the accepted pap of existing periodicals, Newsfield tried to devise a magazine which would encompass every aspect of life, involve the readership as much as the computer titles did and present itself as a long and good read every month. From its plethora of early working titles, it became known as **LM**.

Sadly, the experiment has ended. The fifth issue of **LM** has not been printed. The magazine has closed and its talented and devoted editorial team have gone their separate ways. I said 'ended' – **LM** did not fail, but market forces prevailed against it. Advertising agencies and their clients failed to see the impact **LM** was going to have on the traditionally fractured and difficult 'youth' market. The magazine was referred to as 'too widely targetted'; translated, that means it covered so much ground in its editorial that advertisers couldn't see who was going to buy it. The belief that people aged between 15 and 25 require magazines of a narrow scope and preferably with very few words which skate right over the top of a subject, hardly touching its depths at all, continues.

Advertisers thought **LM** would confuse potential readers and so no-one would buy it. They were wrong. Taking into account the increases in monthly sales from the first issue, **LM** Issue Five would have enjoyed sales probably in excess of 60,000, and I'm confident it was easily set to top 100,000 before the end of the year.

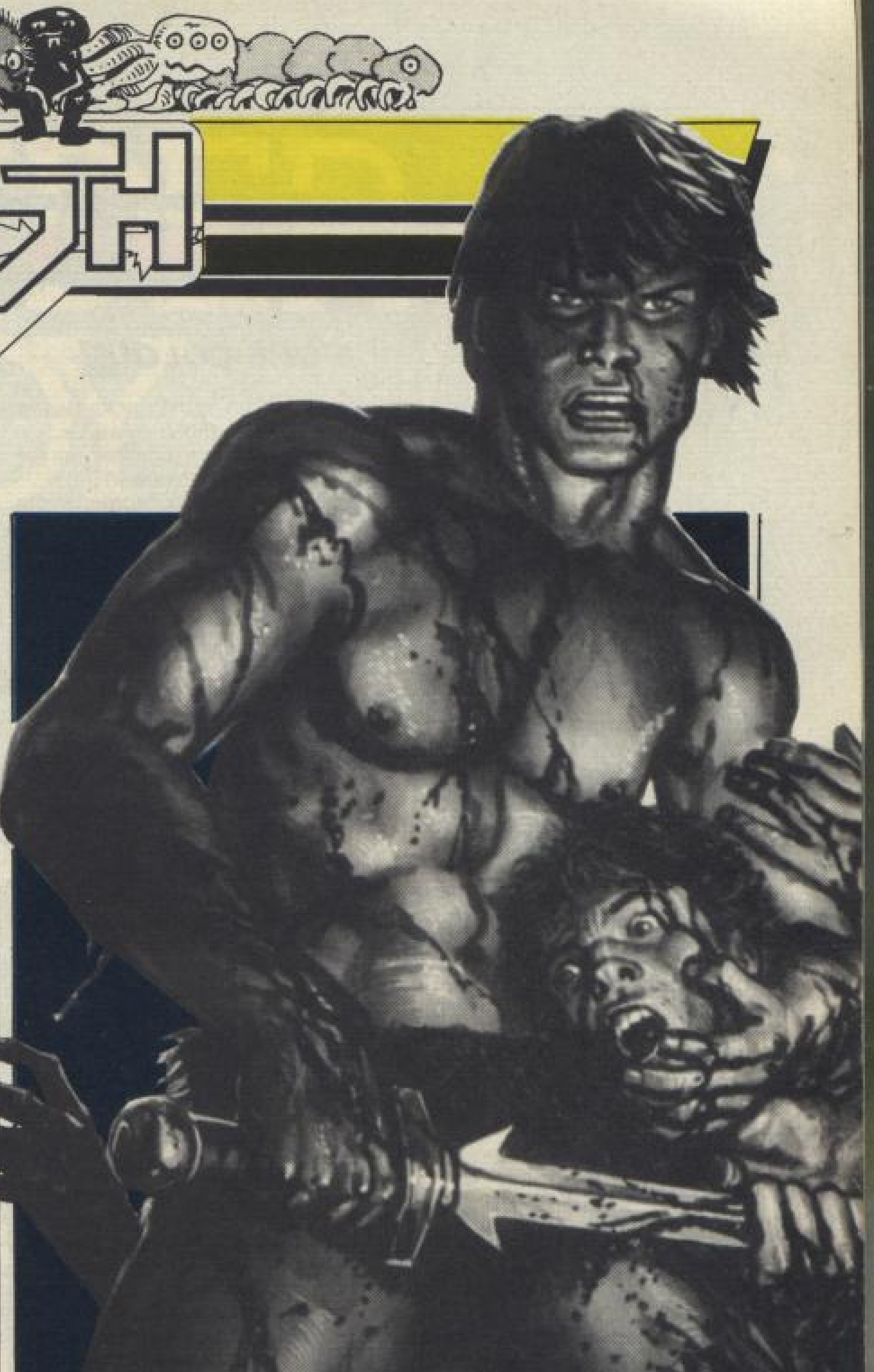
LM had to close because Newsfield is not a huge conglomerate with limitless funds, and the company could not wait any longer for advertising revenue to catch up with **LM**'s monthly costs. As I write, there is still a hope that another publisher will buy the title. But whatever happens, the spirit of **LM** will not die. It lit a flame under the precious notions of youth publishing, and pointed a finger in a different, more vital direction. Hopefully someone will learn a few lessons from it, so that we may look forward to magazines with guts in their bellies instead of guff.

SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN CRASH

Not *all* of **LM** has disappeared. CRASH has inherited its sub-editor **Barnaby Page**. Shuffles and reshuffles seem all the vogue at the moment; Ciarán Brennan, introduced last month, moves over to ZZAP! in an attempt to improve its team's spelling and grammar (now that should be something to see!). Barnaby takes the hot seat at CRASH, and has already contributed heavily to this issue. Readers of **LM** will be familiar with his style – despite his extreme youth, he's the one who can tell you the difference between an ardvaark and a bear-ant. And he's the one I always go to when I get confused between 'comitted' and 'committed'.

We've also tried an experiment in this CRASH – you can find it on page 130 – Video Reviews. The argument goes as follows: CRASH readers live all over the country, not always near a cinema and – whether they do or not – almost certainly hire videos regularly. Films (videos) may not be directly anything to do with computer games (though often enough there are tie-ins and even films featuring computers), but they're a standard part of entertainment, and we thought CRASH readers would like the regular games reviewers' comments on the latest hire shop releases.

If we've got that wrong, no doubt you will tell us. If the ideas proves popular, then we'll rapidly expand the page to a small section, though no more than four pages at most.





▶ Moving from LM to CRASH, Barnaby Page becomes the new sub-editor.



UNWELL

CRASH seems to have suffered from people being unwell of late. Tech Niche fans, however, will be pleased to see Simon Goodwin recovered, back on form and back on the technical pages again. Oliver Frey, unfortunately, has had a couple of weeks feeling poorly, and as a result there's no Terminal Man this issue. But he, too, is back at work again, busily catching up on those colourful pages ready for next month.

MORE COLOUR

I hope you enjoy this packed issue of CRASH as much as we've enjoyed putting it together. For the first time, *every* review in the magazine has colour screen shots (unless I've been misled by someone in 'art'. It rather depends on how the software comes in during the production period – this month was a bit of a struggle with late arrivals, last month was a doddle – as to whether we can get every review in full colour; but we shall always try our best.

Look out for the Special Readers' Offer on page 79, which has some of the best of US Gold's past hits as its attraction. Last month's Gremlin Graphics Offer is going great guns. Over the next few issues, we'll be lining up some more amazing deals for those older games you may have missed. At CRASH we're leaping and bounding ahead.

ROGER KEAN

IN NEXT MONTH'S CRASH



OINK!

A NEVER TO BE REPEATED OPPORTUNITY!

Collect the specially commissioned 16 page FREE issue of this piggy cult comic from IPC to whet your appetite for the new CRL computer game. The snouty team of comic strip wizzkids are even now hard at work preparing comic strip frames of swinish scintillating sibilance, rooting through their ideas drawer for nuggety truffles to discover in your next CRASH. You won't be able to buy this one on the news stands – it's ONLY in CRASH, for CRASH Readers!

THE ACADEMICIAN TUNNELS OUT

PETE COOKE, programmer of *Tau Ceti* and *Academy* talks about his new tunneling game, ***Micronaut One***, how it relates to his earlier hits, why juggernauts are hard to drive, being a streetwise upstart, why computer games are more fun than teaching maths, and why he switched to **Nexus**.

And we reveal who won the CRASH Mapping competition, how the DOMARK Design a Game entrants have fared, ON THE SCREEN returns, plus loads more new reviews, previews and other goodies we haven't even thought of yet . . . but we will!

GAMES REVIEW INDEX

Erratum Nemesis

Sorry! Due to an odd problem that occurred during film planning, last month's review of Konami's *Nemesis* lost its ratings. Here we provide you with a cut out and paste replacement box...

Presentation	73%
Graphics	73%
Playability	54%
Addictive qualities	57%
Value for money	52%
Overall	**59%**

PBM ADDRESS CHANGE

JUST after we'd sent this month's PBM section (starting on page 74) to the printers, the soccer game ***Kick-About*** changed its address. You can now write to *Kick-About* at: *53 Swann Way, Broadbridge Heath, West Sussex RH12 3NQ.*

ADVERTISERS INDEX


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WONDER BOY
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Wonderboy is here for your home computer! From the arcade original by Sega.
Wonderboy is a kid with a quest: to reach his girlfriend across treacherous landscapes and rescue her from the evil King. Burning bonfires, tumbling boulders, poisonous snakes, killer frogs and murderous blue midgets can all make for a short trip – but our hero can break open giant eggs to collect a stone axe, a guardian angel and other valuables to help him on his mission. A skateboard speeds up his progress and picking fruit provides bonus points – if you're careful!
A fast, fun-packed game of skill and timing.
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COMMODORE SCREENS SHOWN
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KILLER INSECT HORROR

AMAUROTE received a CRASH Smash and a rave 128K review last month – but now there are some problems with the Mastertronic budget game, and with their earlier *Zub*.

Mastertronic were running very late with their *Amaurote* schedule, so rather than keep everyone waiting another few weeks they decided to release a 48K-only version – without the flashy music, stills and animated sequence.

They then remastered and released the 48K *Amaurote* with 128K enhancements. The same thing happened with *Zub*.

So there are two versions of *Amaurote* and *Zub* floating around in computer shops.

But if you're a 128/+2 owner who bought a copy of the 48K *Amaurote* or *Zub* on the strength of our reviews only to find that the great graphics and sonic goodies weren't there, you didn't waste your dosh.

To get a proper 128K copy of *Amaurote* or *Zub* just send your 48K version back to Mastertronic with a covering note, and they'll send you a wizzo new one for no extra charge.

Write to Jeff Heath at **Mastertronic Ltd**, *8-10 Paul Street, London EC2A 4JH.*

GAMES MAGS CLOSE

COMPUTER GAMER magazine has closed – just four months after Argus Specialist Publications tried to save the monthly with a major relaunch, making it a lighter read.

But the improvements weren't enough to keep the title alive, said Argus Circulation Director Raymond Lewis. It was selling about 23,000 copies a month, with 'very few' subscribers.

Also gone to the great back-issues office in the sky is Argus's *ZX Monthly*, which had suffered massive circulation damage this year. Through 1986 it was selling an average of 28,652 copies each month (half of them overseas) – but by this spring the figure had dropped to under 20,000, Lewis revealed.

In 1986 CRASH sold an average of 96,327 copies each month.

The June issues of both Argus magazines will be the last. And the company has no plans to sell them off or incorporate them into other titles, according to Lewis.

STOP STOP GADGET

MELBOURNE HOUSE has scrapped *Inspector Gadget And The Circus Of Fear*, due for release this spring.

The TV licence featured the hapless policeman and his Go Go Gadgets in a madcap struggle to defuse bombs and save the world – but it seems problems in the Spectrum program by David Moore and William Tang blew up in the software house's face.

A new *Inspector Gadget* will be programmed, starting from scratch, says Melbourne House's Jo Meads.

RO RO RO YOUR BOT

REACH OUT and touch something with Educated Archie, announced as the 'ultimate serious toy' for home computers – a robotic arm which picks up objects and uses tools, controlled from a Spectrum.

He (it?) can stretch his arm out 350 mm (just over a foot) and hold objects weighing up to 250 g (about half a pound).

Developed by Oxbridge Technology in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, Archie takes just two hours to assemble, and the minirobot's software will quickly teach you how to use him

Archie is available for most personal computers; the £220 price includes an appropriate software package. At the moment he's on sale only from the manufacturers, though an Oxbridge Technology spokesman says Archie will be in at least three high-street chains by the autumn.

But if you can't last the summer without Archie stirring a cool drink, contact **Oxbridge Technology Limited** at *Breckland, Saxon Street, Linford Wood, Milton Keynes MK14 6LD* or ring them on (0908) 314626.



Spectrum robotics: Archie



THINK AGAIN

FIREBIRD'S £1.99 Silver range recently bought the rights to some 40 oldies-but-goodies by Activision. Now they've added Ariolasoft's puzzle game *Think!* to their list of cheap classics – it should be on the streets already. *Think!*, from Tigress Designs, received 82% Overall in the April 1986 CRASH.

BOUNDER BOUNDS BACK

BOUNDER is a year old this month, and to celebrate the bbbbouncy tennis-bbbball hero's bbbbirthday Gremlin will release his next adventure, *Re-Bounder*, in July for £7.99.

It'll be much like the original *Bounder* (a CRASH Smash in June 1986) – *Bounder*'s two programmers, Colin 'Fungus' Dooley and Chris Kerry, are doing the conversion from the C64.

In *Re-Bounder* the player negotiates 18 perilous levels of impenetrable walls, collapsible floors and spiky tennis-ball-bursting objects . . .

But this time Bounder is equipped with armour plating and a weapon (which still hasn't been chosen by Gremlin's armoury!) – so there'll be plenty of alien-blasting needed to get through and obliterate the sentinel at the end of each level.



OCEAN ON THE MARCH

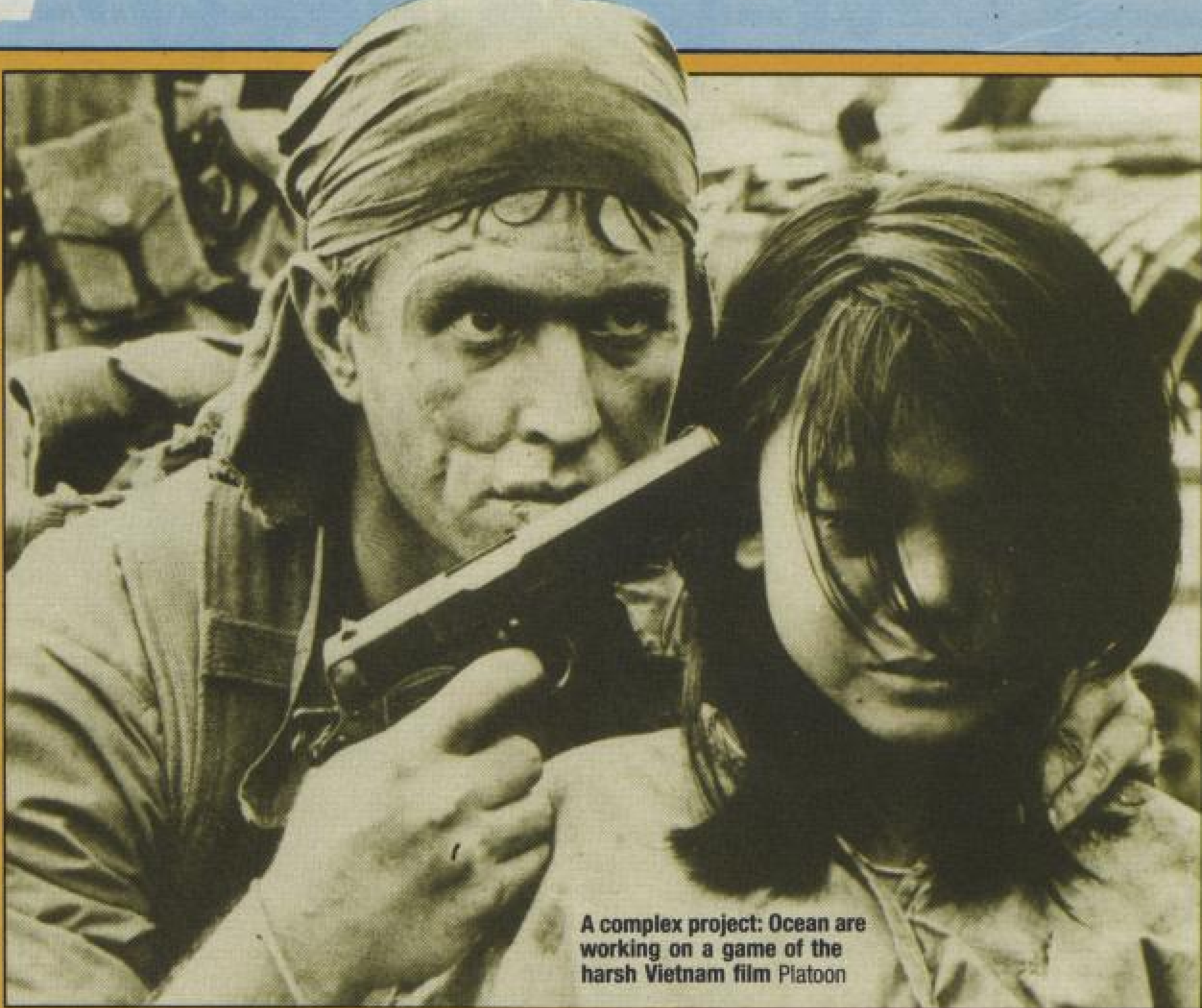
OCEAN has commissioned a game of the gritty Vietnam film *Platoon*, which zoomed to the top of the box-office charts when it was released last month.

The *Platoon* game should appear this autumn on the three main formats.

Ocean's Gary Bracey couldn't reveal who the programmers are, but said that it's not being done in-house – and that the names will have 'a familiar ring'. The world waits.

Describing the difficult *Platoon* project, Ocean Chairman David Ward explained: '*Platoon* doesn't contain the political rhetoric of *Rambo*, yet it's been a tremendous success. It's an honest film, and we intend to treat it sympathetically.

'In computer entertainment the victorious soldier is usually the hero,' he said, 'but in this film the heroes are much more complex. So a lot of work and thought is required to create a stimulating product.'



A complex project: Ocean are working on a game of the harsh Vietnam film Platoon

A WAG TOO FAR?

THE MAD SCIENTISTS at Konix continue their cruel and unusual waggling of the company's Speed King joystick in an attempt to find out just how long you can shake it all about, *our Waggling Editor writes.*

The joystick, which declined to be named, has been waggled by an electric drill since early March at 450 wpm (waggles per minute), 12 hours a day, six days a week. CRASH calculates that by the time this is published the Speed King will have waggled some 20 million waggles – if it survives.

Someone stands to win £100 when the joystick waggles its last; a couple of hundred entered a Konix competition (now closed) to guess its endurance, as reported by Hunter S Minson in the Christmas CRASH. The highest guess was 11 years, says Konix waggling spokesman Michael Baxter . . .

The Speed King is connected to an Amstrad 6128K computer, where a program by Christian Urquhart will monitor its dying shudders. Urquhart says the 450 wpm rate is enough to qualify from the first round in the 100 metres in *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*, which he coauthored.

Does that make Konix a corporate champion? Is the amateur spirit of the Olympics irretrievably lost? It's hard to know where Konix (based in Tredegar, Gwent) will stop – the joystick is 'still waggling persistently', says Baxter, and they're aiming for the *Guinness Book Of World Records*.

The Konix Speed King joystick caught in a waggling moment





ONE OF OUR SUBS IS BANNED

WEST GERMANY has banned MicroProse's *Silent Service* – for being 'too realistic'.

The Second World War sub simulation, known in Germany as *Das U Boot*, was placed on the Youth Dangerous Publications List, set up to protect young Germans from porn and material which might encourage violence.

Now the game (reviewed in FRONTLINE, CRASH March 1987) is only available to West Germans from controlled outlets such as sex shops.

But MicroProse plans to appeal the decision, and take the West German authorities to court if necessary. Said the American software house's President, Bill Stealey: 'They should take a second look at legislation which wrongly lumps together computer software with pornographic videos.

'Driving sophisticated software into the backstreets will have a damaging effect on Germany's own burgeoning industry.'

While Stealey seeks to save *Das U Boot*, staff at MicroProse's European headquarters in Tetbury, Gloucestershire can wait and see whether the furore will push up UK sales of *Silent Service*, already one of their top sellers – the German incident even got them the front page of *The Independent*.

Fear & Loathing

WAR IS HELL

Nobody said it was going to be easy, but did it have be as bad as this? The first victim of ligging is sobriety, and Minson joins the other grunts in a fight for survival as publications explode about his ears.

This has been a tough month. It's not that there's been a shortage of launches – far from it. But mighty forces are shifting, the walls are closing in and the sticky brown rain is coming.

But let's start our weirdness at the American Embassy. I've only visited this imposing bunkhouse once before, and that was to obtain a visa. That time the marines all but strip-searched me before letting me into the building.

This time I wasn't taking any chances. The night before I lawn-mowered my hair, giving myself the sort of cut that only a GI could love. Then I donned mirror shades, a Hawaiian shirt, and a 'Vote For Nixon' badge to show that I wasn't one of those commie pinkos who'd kick a president just because he was a bigger bugger than most.

As I approached the building I felt a strong desire to start chanting 'Hell no, we won't go', and burn my draft card – sorry invite – but Microprose had made it quite clear that there was no admission without that square of card, so I bit on the bullet.

Having run the gauntlet of metal detectors and sworn that I have never been a communist or related to Gadaffi, I was allowed into the reception. And who was the first person I saw? If it wasn't my old (and I use the word advisedly) nemesis, **Kremlin**, a well known Commie(dore 64 user).

Didn't this make a mockery of all that stringent security? Not at all. From the number of journalists nobody had ever seen before, all of whom had matching crew cuts and wore matching, light-weight grey suits (with equally matching bulges under their left armpits), I guessed that they'd got everything under control.

Yes, it seems that even the CIA loves Microprose programs, unlike the German government. That noble institution has put restrictions on titles such as the submarine simulation *Silent Service*, in case the militaristic aspects corrupt their youth. I can just see a teenage gang cruising down the Bonn high street in a submarine, torpedoing old women and children.

Of course Microprose isn't war-mongering. But Microprose is **Major 'Wild Bill' Stealey**, Fighter Pilot Supreme and Chief Advisor, Joint Chiefs of Staff, as his 'Wild Bill card' proudly proclaims. And what do you expect of a pedigree like that – a lesson in lying down and letting the commies march all over us? No siree! You can almost hear the sneer when the Microprose promo video turns from the joys of trashing the towel heads in *F-15 Strike Eagle* to the likes of *Solo Flight*, a pacifist prop plane for mummy's boys who like to play with themselves. By the time we'd reached *Conflict in Vietnam* I was so keyed up that I was ready to enrol and nook those gooks.

But an army marches on its stomach, and I can highly recommend the American Embassy any time you're feeling peckish. Burgers, hot dogs, ribs, and great pecan pie, plus Bud to guzzle of course. Beats MacDonalds any day.

After my visit to the helm of the aircraft carrier USS Great Britain, the Rock Garden was something of a step down. Actually there's a lot of steps down into that cellar, better known for sweaty crowds on Saturday Nights. But on a Friday lunchtime, the only starlight to be found was the software label



. . . and the sparkle in the eyes of the unbelievably wonderful **Amanda Barry**.

Security was, if anything, even tighter than at the American Embassy. I'm used to bouncers when I go to gigs, but heavies at a press launch is a different story altogether. Combined with the opressive atmosphere of an impending storm outside and the prospect of Rock Garden cuisine, I did what any self respecting journalist would do . . . I freaked!

Staying sane just long enough to log Starfire nouveau shoot 'em up *Red LED*, which involves fast blasting to win spaces on a battle grid spread over a multi-level landscape, I did a quick survey of the throng. Almost immediately my eyes alighted on the eligible **Michael Baxter** and his divine partner in PR, **Sarah Donovan**.

'Save me', I screamed. 'Don't you know that they're closing in? We need to take your car, load up with an expensive sound system and enough recreational aids to keep us unhinged, then drive out to the Fens at 125 mph, with the hood down and me standing naked shouting at the elements!'

Would you believe that Baxter just giggled? I wouldn't take no for an answer though. Pausing only to pick up my super Starlight goodie bag, I slipped outside. But Baxtie and Donovan were slippier than I was and had given me the slip. Never mind, I did learn several very interesting facts about the eligible



one, and you'll be reading more about them next month unless a meal is forthcoming in the interim (that's what you said about Maria Whittaker – Ed).

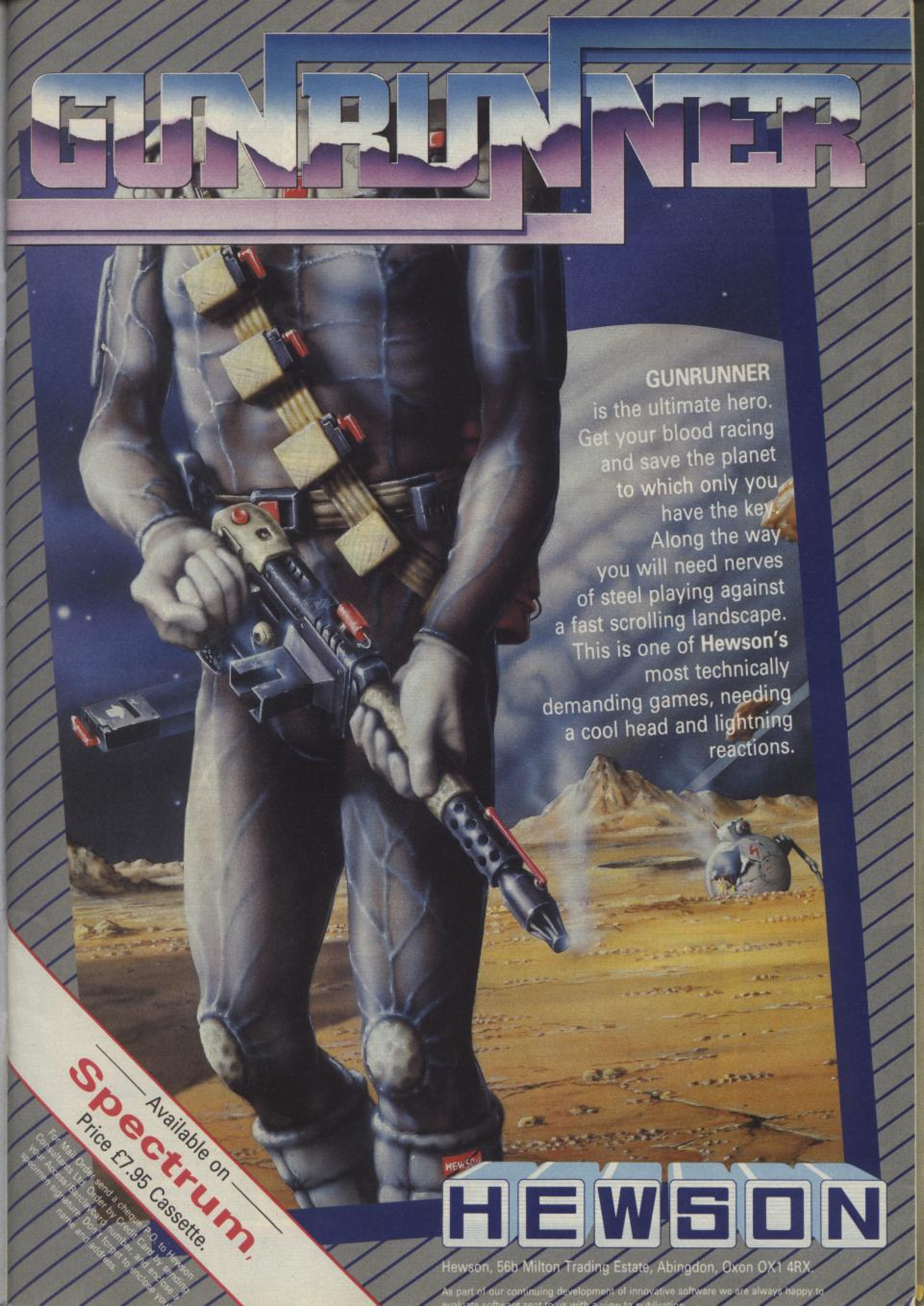
By now the fear was upon me and it was only the calming presence of **Clare Edgeley** that kept me together enough to drop in on Rainbird's do at The Cheshire Cheese, off Fleet Street.

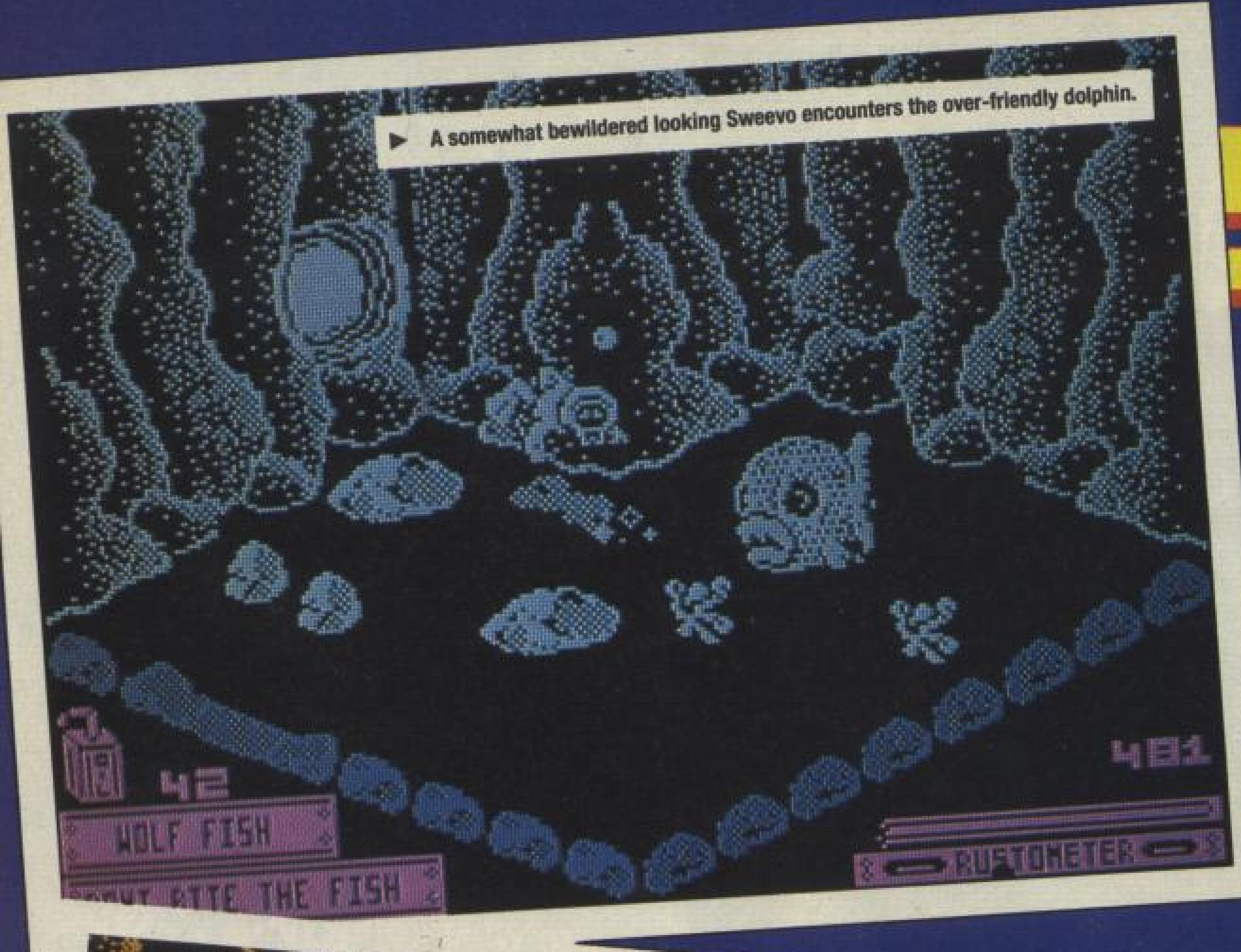
Apart from the fact that 128 owners can now enjoy the king of adventures, *The Pawn*, there was nothing imminent for Spectrum users. This was a birthday party for its sequel, *Guild of Thieves*, which is first appearing on all those yuppie machines like the Amiga and ST. Everything comes to those that wait though, particularly with the +3 on the horizon.

Everything comes to Minson too. As I stumbled out of this thieves den, Clare pressed a bag labelled 'Swag' into my sticky hands. Seems that she'd just done over a wine merchants and wanted me to help dispose of the evidence – a very pleasant white, Cheers!

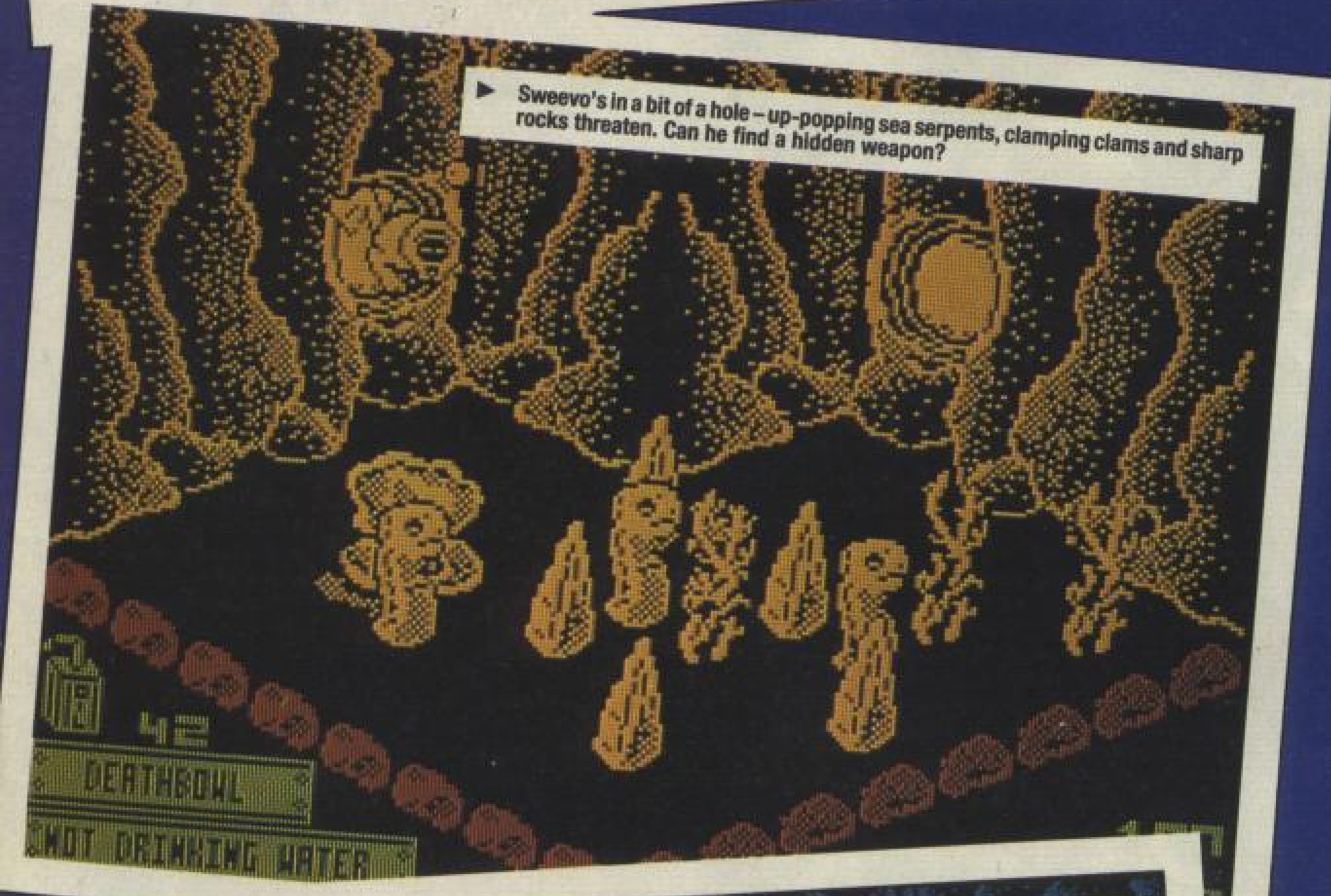
But making a beast of myself hasn't been enough to keep away the harshness of reality. It's time to get serious. This month has seen the departure of three magazines. Two were computer titles, ZX computing and Computer Gamer. It's always sad – and somewhat worrying – when the market starts to shrink. There were some damn good people on those mags too, more faces who've gone missing in action.

The other tragedy lies closer to home. As you'll have read elsewhere in this issue, **LM** is a victim of the accountants and other financial problems that make a publishers life so hard. Speaking as both a contributor and a reader, I'm sorry to see it go. It had a fine, dedicated team working to produce an intelligent, perceptive and often controversial publication. And perhaps that was the problem. Maybe it was just too hard hitting. Maybe it was ahead of its time. Whatever the the reason, it will be missed.

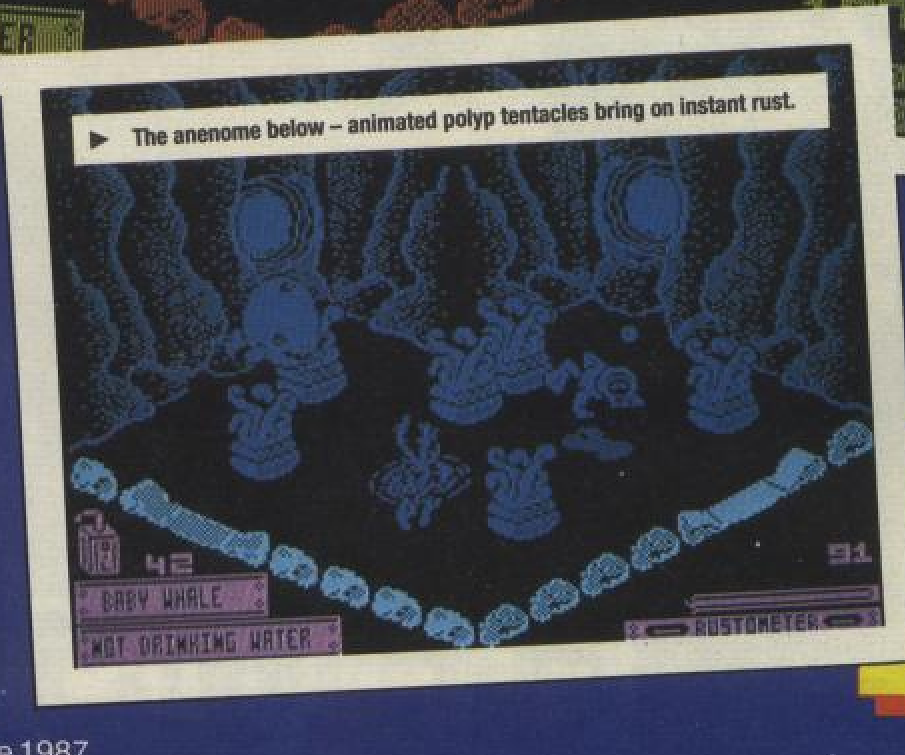

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▶ A somewhat bewildered looking Sweevo encounters the over-friendly dolphin.



▶ Sweevo's in a bit of a hole – up-popping sea serpents, clamping clams and sharp rocks threaten. Can he find a hidden weapon?



▶ The anenome below – animated polyp tentacles bring on instant rust.

H•Y•D•R•O•

About a year and a half ago a Self Willed Extreme Environment Organism (SWEEVO to his friends) was sent to a mysterious world, Knutz Folly. Once there Sweevo had to do a spot of tidying up and capture several cute Widgers. Now, after much effort and bumbling, Sweevo has returned with a vengeance and, well, a wimper or two.

The kindly old Robo-Master gnashed his metallic teeth and roaring at Sweevo said, 'I didn't expect you back so soon . . . so, go and clean out the Deathbowl and don't return until you've finished doing that.'

Sweevo, being the wary soul that he is, picked up his copy of Galactic Aquarist (essential reading for all inter galactic cleaners of deadly bowls) and read:

The gigantic aquarium known as

CRITICISM

" Sweevo's World was a very original game that had a quality very hard to define, and one that hasn't quite been reproduced since. Bearing this in mind I was annoyed to hear that FTL were doing a follow up. Hydrofool has turned out to be a Sweevo's clone (the similarities are too numerous to mention) that's playable and compelling, but not the step forward that its 'parent' was. The puzzles take a while to solve but aren't frighteningly hard once you've learnt the basic layout of the playing area. The graphics leave little to be desired, some character definition is excellent, and the sub-aqua effect works convincingly well. Sound, too, is more than adequate (except for the re-run of the Sweevo's World title tune), but the 128K tune and effects are far superior. This should provide plenty of puzzle solving and mapping fun for all. Recommended."

BEN

Producer: FTL
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Roy Carter and Greg Follis**

A CRASH Smash

the Deathbowl is now so heavily polluted that the only remedy is to completely drain it by pulling out each of the four plugs.

So there you have it, Sweevo with diving gear in tow has been abandoned on another strange world with only his wits (or lack of them) to protect him from the plethora of weird and wonderful creatures, none of whom are too fond of alien life forms draining away their

CRITICISM

" Essentially Hydrofool**'s concept is a rehash of the old** Sweevo's **game, new names and different baddies perhaps, but very similar – even the same** Sweevo's **tune. However, there are some completely new graphics. The main characters are superbly animated and drawn with a great amount of detail. I found** Hydrofool **much harder to play than its predecessor, although the problems are fairly logically set out. The backgrounds create a good feeling of depth with the creatures adding to the strong atmosphere. If you've seen** Sweevo's **then don't expect much different – still a great game though."**

PAUL

habitat. Each of the plugs must be pulled in the correct order else an inaccessible level is created. And to pull a plug several puzzles must be solved by moving specific objects to particular places.

Unfortunately these objects are often guarded by Deathbowl's denizens, or they may even be a part of a particularly despicable nasty. Luckily, though, there are weapons to be found in abundance for the destruction of these creatures but watch the ammo level, it's very limited.

Deathbowl is constructed on several interlinking levels in a similar manner to *Sweevo's World*. Whirlpools are used to travel downwards to the next level and bubbles for upward movement. The game itself is presented in 3D isometric views, using two, but varying, colours for the caverns.

Sweevo has several lives, one being lost each time his Rustomter reaches maximum. Such occurs rapidly as soon as Sweevo makes contact with water (silly fool forgot his wet suit), but if it starts to get dangerously high, rusting can be temporarily halted by finding the oil cans that pollute Deathbowl.

CRITICISM

" Some game formats can stand cloning by their creators, and what made Sweevo's World **was the content more than the look – which is saying a lot because it looked great. So** Hydrofool **survives less for its originality than because it's still a highly enjoyable romp, packed with loads of puzzles, a need for dexterity and plenty of atmosphere – the first time you see a sea serpent pop up from the floor ranks as quite a shock. The feel of the game relies heavily on the high quality graphics – Sweevo really does seem to be swimming under water. With the large number of screens, and the intricately woven Greg Follis puzzles,** Hydrofool **should hold its appeal for quite some time."**

RICKY

Touching guardians is none too healthy either, so once armed – shoot to kill!

The game is spread out over more than 200 caverns, and the 128K version boasts an even bigger map as well as a Rob Hubbard score, a cartographer's delight no less. *Hydrofool* is some mean beast to beat, the programmers estimate a game time of about four hours for experienced cleaners.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q W E R T/ Y U I O P up left/up right, A S D F G/H J K L down left/ down right, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: monochromatic playing area
Graphics: superb definition and animation
Sound: good tune and spot FX, better still on 128
Skill levels: one
Screens: over 200
General rating: A first class sequel, entertaining, addictive and highly amusing.

Presentation	84%
Graphics	91%
Playability	85%
Addictive Qualities	90%
Value for Money	83%
Overall	90%

PARABOLA

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **J Bond**

Bouncing Bruce, the well-known droid on a spring, is caught in a multisectored cosmic energy grid – and he wants to escape from every level.

Surrounded by the black oblivion of space, each sector is composed of blocks, set at different heights and forming a grid. Bruce can move up to three blocks at a time, in straight lines (he can't move diagonally, though). Controlling Bruce, you can decide the height of each bounce and move him up to higher levels of the grid.

Some grid squares contain rotating energy discs; when he lands on one Bruce collects the disc and scores points. And when he's picked up all the discs in each sector, bouncing boy can move on to the next.

But Bruce is hindered by danger blocks – squares with circular ejection devices force him upward so he crashes, moving guards can shatter his delicate frame, and direction blocks propel him in the wrong direction. To avoid these threats – and save his eight lives – Bruce must bounce up and over them.

MIKE

" I'm impressed. Parabola, **though simple, is an addictive little game; my only moan is that the screens soon start repeating themselves. Quite a change from the normal run of isometric games,** Parabola **is presented attractively, with some good graphics; unfortunately, Firebird's instructions are typically overconcise. Once understood, though,** Parabola **is well worth getting stuck into, especially at this price. "**

BEN

" Not very original, this – there's a host of games following the same sort of gameplan, and none of them are very appealing. The only real difference between Parabola **and the many other** Q Bert **games around a few years ago is that here you only have to bounce on some, not all, of the squares – which makes it very easy to play, and pretty tedious too. For the price this is fairly well-presented both graphically and sonically, but it lacks playability and addictiveness. "**

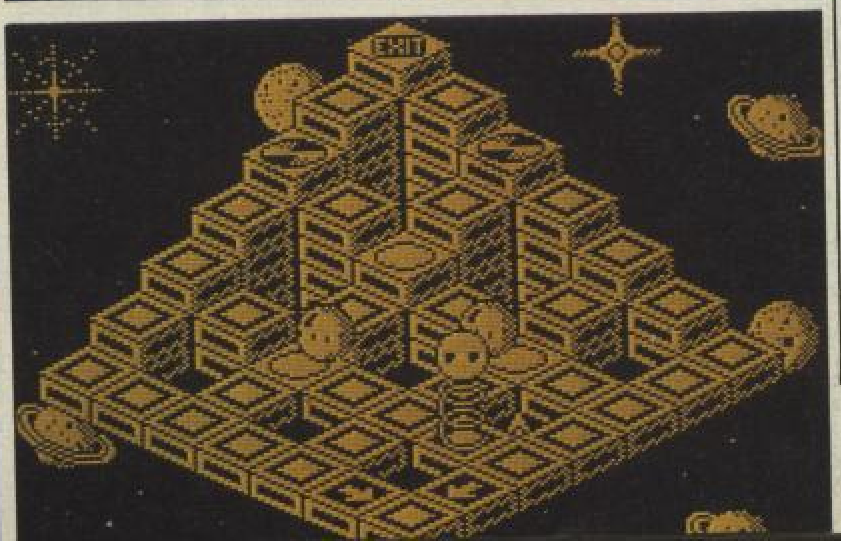
PAUL

" The presentation of Parabola **is superb, breaking a few Spectrum boundaries – six different colours in one character square!! But it's a pity there's nothing new within the game; it's all boring old mono-chromatic play areas. Though the control method seems strange at first, persistence brings high rewards. The graphics are very detailed and the perspective is believable. And though the basic idea of** Parabola **is old, it's a most enjoyable product, certainly worth two pounds. "**

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: very clever, touches well employed
Graphics: reasonable sprites, good 3D effect
Sound: above average
Skill levels: one
General rating: Well presented budget game on an old theme of moderate addictiveness.

Presentation	73%
Graphics	70%
Playability	57%
Addictive qualities	54%
Value for money	66%
Overall	63%



ARMY MOVES

Producer: Ocean
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Dynamic Software**

Derdhal is a member of the Special Operations Corps. His mission is to infiltrate a heavily guarded enemy base and steal information held in a safe.

To achieve this aim he must cross the seven screens of this horizontally scrolling arcade game, passing through swamp, jungle, desert and sea. Each screen must be completed before progress can be made to the next.

At his disposal Derdhal has a jeep, a helicopter and his marching boots. The jeep and helicopter can be accelerated, slowed and made to jump (take off and land) whilst Derdhal himself moves left and right and jumps.

Energy and fuel supplies are limited, with the level remaining shown at the bottom right. Derdhal is armed with weapon systems ranging from missiles to grenades. When opposing forces are destroyed points are awarded, and the total displayed at the bottom of the screen. A bonus life is acquired after 25,000 points.

The first stage sees Derdhal's jeep travelling across a partially destroyed bridge, gaps in which are leaped by using the jeep's turbo boost. Helicopters and trucks attack, and contact with either loses a life. They may be destroyed with ground to ground, or ground to air missiles fired from the jeep. At the end of the bridge an enemy base is reached, from there a helicopter is stolen and used to reach the jungle base. An extra nine lives are now credited to our commando.

Now Derdhal flies over desert, (rich in missile silos and attacking jets), a sea full of submarines, and a jungle (complete with look-out posts). Low flying earns him credits, but is more dangerous. A good landing earns additional points at the jungle heliport.

Derdhal moves on foot towards the jungle headquarters, crossing swamps by leaping from island to island, missing quicksands, avoiding the explosions of enemy grenades (at night their position is shown by lighted eyes) and scaring away or ducking beneath the deadly beaks of Giant Toucans. From now on soldier-boy is equipped only with a machine gun and grenades.

Having survived the jungle ordeal, the next stage involves attacking the enemy's barracks. There the main building is scanned from watch towers, but these can be knocked out using grenades. Shots can be fired from a crouched position and windows crawled beneath in an effort to improve your chances.

Once inside the main building the central bunker is entered and the search for the safe begins. Derdhal hides behind doors and prevents them from being opened, and when on the stairs he cannot be seen by the enemy. Should he throw grenades whilst in the bunker he must take care as they can bounce off walls at dangerous angles. Finding the safe complete's Derdhal's mission.



► Ensconced in his helicopter, Derdhal attacks an enemy jet, while below it, a missile silo opens up.



► In his marching boots, Derdhal tramps through the infested jungles.

BEN

" Despite the slick presentation and the neat graphics and sonics which Dynamic have incorporated in Army Moves**, it still doesn't grab me. A rigorous play-testing will soon show any self-respecting player that there's no fun involved. The first six levels are much too hard, causing increasing frustration so one gets increasingly infuriated. The use of colour throughout is dubious, there are a lot of attribute problems and some of the landscapes are garish. I wouldn't recommend this. "**

PAUL

" Army Moves **is extremely difficult to play. Not because it's too complicated or requires lightning-fast reactions (because it doesn't), but because of the bad design of the play area and the inaccurate collision detection. The graphics are well defined, even though the colour used is appalling. Sound is below average with very boring effects, and nothing approaching a decent tune. The controls are sluggish, even with a joystick. I had little fun playing** Army Moves **– it's very boring, plain and a great disappointment "**

GARETH

" One of the most frustrating games I've seen this month – Army Moves **is almost totally impossible, not because playing is difficult, but due to the screen layout and the slipshod collision detection. The sound is also pretty substandard, with no tune and poor spot effects. It might appeal to the Rambo types who like killing anything that moves, but for me there's no real lastability. "**

COMMENTS

Control keys: Definable; Up, Down, Left, Right, Fire
Joystick: Kempston
Use of colour: varied through the screens, often brightly coloured
Graphics: large, detailed and well defined
Sound: below average
Skill levels: one
Screens: seven levels with flip screens
General rating: Dubious collision detection spoils what otherwise might have been a reasonable, if uninspiring shoot 'em up.

Presentation	61%
Graphics	56%
Playability	52%
Addictive qualities	51%
Value for money	57%
Overall	54%


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BUBBLER

Producer: Ultimate
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Ashby Computer Graphics**

The inhabitants of the ancient city of Irkon have long been enslaved by the wizard tyrant, Vadra. To further fasten his grip about them he has now created magical bottles – bubblers – which blow mutant-releasing bubbles.

Long ago you spoke out against Vadra, and as a result were imprisoned and converted into an immobile blob. Kintor, one time assistant to Vadra, eventually joins you. Using magical powers, Kintor endows you with temporary movement and the ability to fire lethal energy. Now you have the means to overthrow the evil warlock.

The bubblers are plugged by use of magic corks, automatically collected when you pass through one of the prison's trapdoors. However, some trapdoors are corkless, and entering them leads only to death. With each bottle corked Vadra's power diminishes, and consequently Kintor's increases.

Trapdoors and bottles are found by moving along and through the prison's 3D system of platforms, towers and slopes. You can move forward in a direction defined by rotation to the right or left, and can move up slopes, roll down them under the pull of gravity, jump and catch hoists to higher structures. All manoeuvres must be precise in order to remain on the platforms and pathways, and thus avoid plunging to your death.

As you progress, prison denizens are released from flashing patches around the dungeon, these may kill you outright or try to push you off ledges – other hazards to look out for are weapons towers which fire accurate bursts of energy, and spikes which position themselves underneath as you plummet from a platform. Mystery bubbles are also blown from the bubblers, when popped these release bonus points, alarm clocks (for extra time), extra lives, or bombs. Sharp objects pierce your delicate skin and burst you, if any of your five lives are remaining reincarnation occurs near the killing point.

A time limit is set for the task and should it run out a life is lost. However, time is restored with every new life or corking of a bottle, and increased by collecting alarm clocks. The score, compass, time and lives remaining are displayed at the top and bottom of the screen.

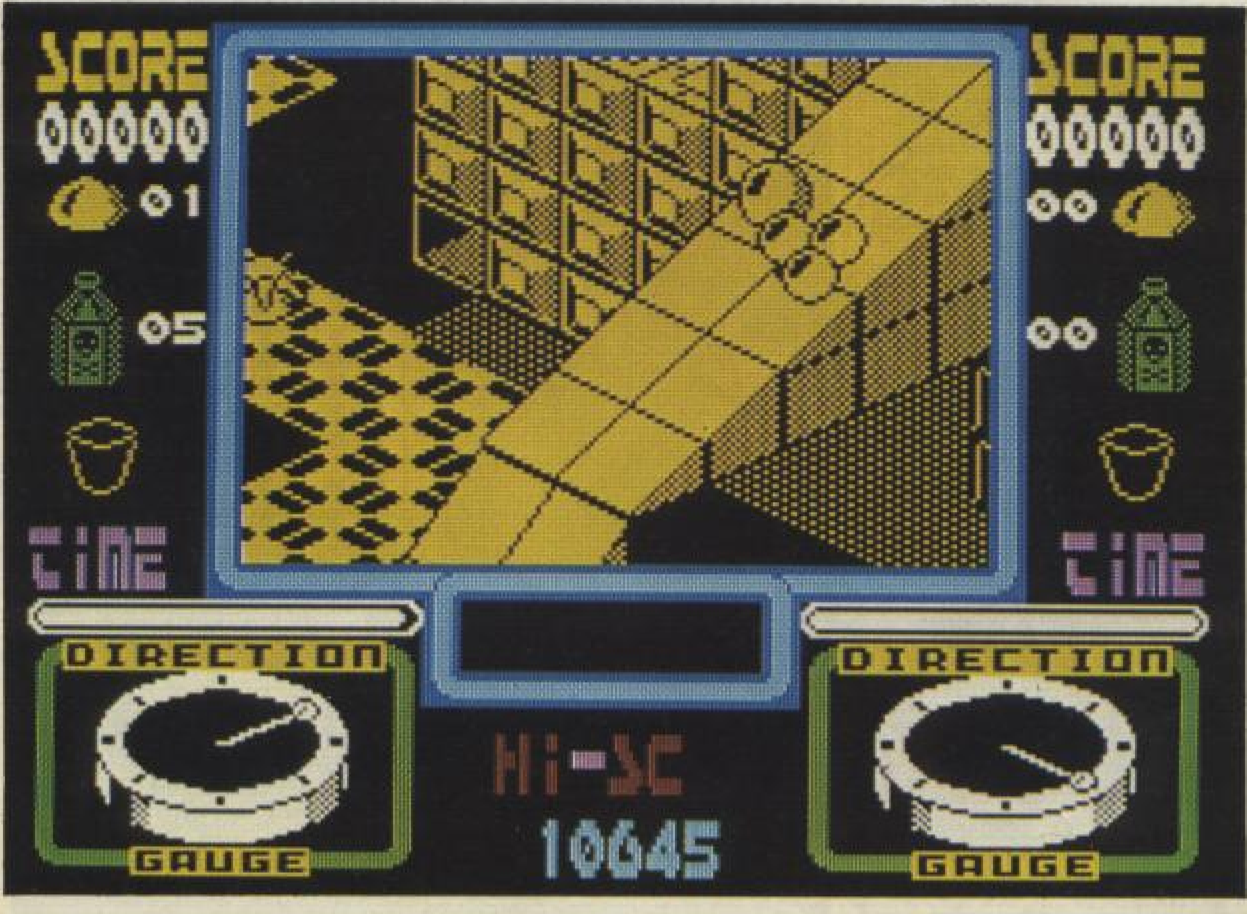
PAUL

" Once Ultimate was on a pedestal above all other software companies. Each release saw their cult following fill computer shops all over the country – everybody wanting to see just how far the the ACG team had pushed the Spectrum this time. Sadly those glorious times are long since gone, and the once-great company now blends in unremarkably with the rest of the market. Bubbler **breaks no new ground. The superbly animated graphics are very appealing, but the 3D perspective isn't as convincing as that used in previous Ultimate products and the scenery appears disjointed. Those that can master the awkward control method may find a rewarding game, but I'm left with a slight feeling of disappointment. "**

BEN

" After a fair amount of practice, Bubbler **has turned out to be one of the most playable** Marble Madness **type games we've seen. The graphics are superb, with well animated characters and pretty landscapes which scroll excellently – the title screen is impressive too. The control method is a horrible rotate left or right job, and because of this it takes a while to get used to the game's workings – however, I'd recommend this as it's a slick piece of playable programming. "**

► Ancient Irkon is under the sway of evil Vadra and the naughty bubbles, and there you are, an amorpheous blob, caught on a slope in the presence of three bubbles.



► What's a nice blob like you doing in a place like this?



RICKY

" I've tried really hard to like this, but the lack of playability destroys the effect created by the more enjoyable elements. Like previous Ultimate offerings, Bubbler **uses the 'turn and walk' directional control which may have been fine before but with the addition of inertia and leaping it becomes very imprecise. The compass at the bottom of the screen also confuses matters. "**

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z C B M left, X V N SYMBOL SHIFT right, A S D F forward, W R Y I P fire, Q E T U O jump
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Use of colour: monochromatic playing area
Graphics: smooth multi-directional scrolling and excellent character definition
Sound: a reasonable title tune, jam-packed with FX
Skill levels: one
Screens: five scrolling landscapes
General rating: Almost back to Ultimate's old standard, although mixed reviewer feelings affect the ratings. Well worth it if you can master the awkward control system.

Presentation	87%
Graphics	88%
Playability	74%
Addictive qualities	82%
Value for money	71%
Overall	78%

GHOST HUNTERS



Producer: Code Masters
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Philip and Andrew Oliver**

Professor Twilight, the proud owner of Nightmare Mansion, has offered a reward for the eradication of the stately home's ghosts and ghoulies. Chuck Studbuckle took up the challenge, but after five days inside the horrid house he still has not returned. As his brother, it's your duty to go and rescue him.

In order to make a room to room search, you can jump up and down, move to the left and right and climb walls. The Mansion's lifts move between floors and are activated by touching flashing objects; including a crystal ball, goblet, necklace and document. This action also increases your score, as displayed at the bottom right of the screen, but beware – the objects are not necessarily close to the lifts which they control. A map of Nightmare Mansion is called up to verify your present position.

Vampires, hands, skulls, and slime materialise to thwart you as you progress. When close, these cause the Terrometer reading to increase and your Macho Energy level to fall. These creatures can be avoided, but only with difficulty and a great drain on energy. Your remaining reserves are shown on the left hand side of the screen, and are replenished by drinking the frothing beakers of magic potion which are found about the house.



▶ Fearless Chuck Studbuckle prowls Nightmare Mansion hellbent on eradicating everything that goes bump in the night.



RICKY

" Now this is interesting – all the fun of a platform/exploration game combined with the joy of killing for a second player. Played alone, Ghost Hunters can get rather monotonous, especially as there isn't that much to look at. However, if you tackle the game with two players it can really be most enjoyable. Solving the tasks isn't too difficult, but it should keep you playing for long enough to get your money's worth. "

PAUL

" The loading screen and title music set the scene perfectly for what is a very atmospheric game. The graphics are superb, with the screen containing a lot of characters and furniture – all of them detailed and recognisable. Ghost Hunters **is fiendishly addictive, so make sure you have a good few hours to spare before loading it up. The Terrometer and Macho meter work well together and are very useful. I loved every minute of this, it's a giveaway at £1.99. "**

Your only weapon is a sub-compact anti-matter Phantom splatterer, one shot from which temporarily returns demons to their astral plane. Some creatures are indestructible, but those which are destroyed earn more valuable points.



BEN

" I have a lot of respect for Code Masters, they have avoided releasing the sort of rubbish that emanates from other Budget Houses. The atmospheric graphics hold together well despite lacking colour, and the characters move realistically. Roaming the haunted house becomes absorbing once the control method has been mastered, and the two player mode makes it slightly easier as you don't have to concentrate both on running around and shooting up the ghoulies. The appeal may be short-lived however, as Ghost Hunters isn't that big a game and completion should be easy. "

The program features an unusual two player mode. Unlike other two player games, Ghost Hunters does not place the participants in competition or allow them to control two separate characters. Instead, One player controls the character's movement while the other operates the weapon.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Definable; Up, Down, Left, Right, Fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Use of colour: you can choose one of two colours and black
Graphics: atmospheric, well detailed and realistically animated
Sound: excellent title music and reasonable FX
Skill levels: one
General rating: An entertaining game with the added bonus of two-player mode, playable but might shade off in long-term appeal.

Presentation	74%
Graphics	70%
Playability	78%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	82%
Overall	77%

CHRONOS

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **The Radical Tubes**

Chronos is imprisoned in another time dimension by the Mystical Dimension Weavers, beings he himself created. Six levels need to be completed before Chronos can be freed from his plight.

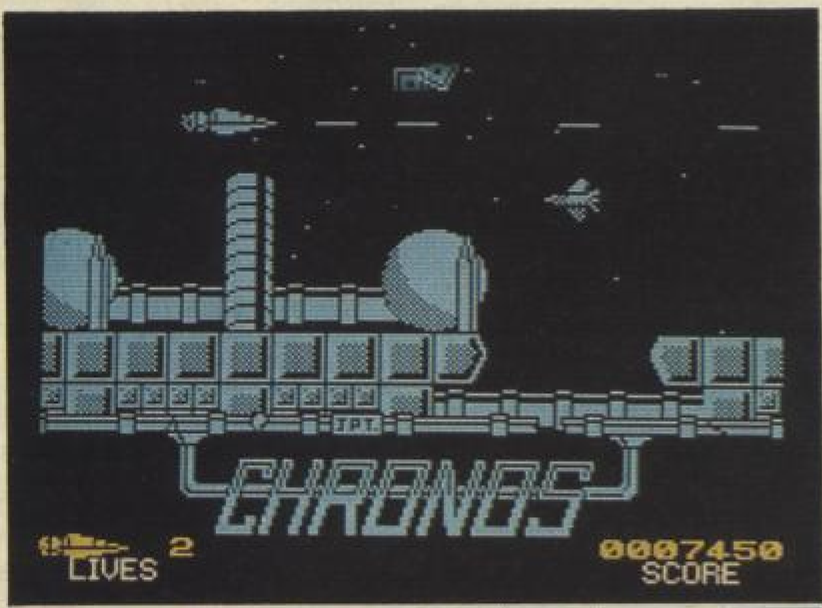
You pilot a laser-carrying space craft capable of moving up and down, and to the left and right, through a maze of constructed space corridors. Many of these are blocked by laser barriers or other obstructions that must be cleared by blasting. As you progress alien craft, lethal orbs and rotating 'yin-yangs', fly through your space with increasing frequency. Contact with these, or any part of the space landscape, loses you one of three lives. For each obstruction or attacker laser-smeared, points are awarded, with an extra life acquired at 10,000 points.

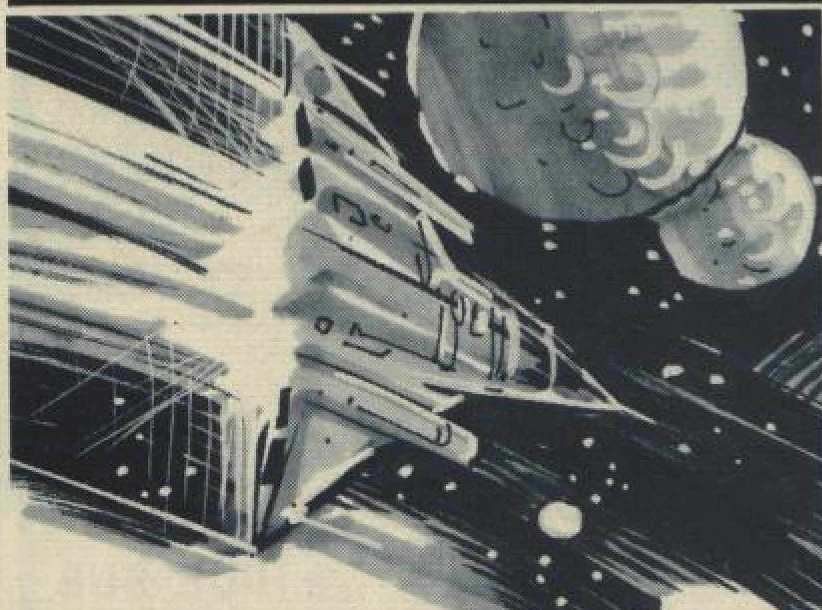
Occasionally, the letters B, O, N, U, S appear, which, surprisingly enough, give bonus points should they be collected in correct spelling order.

MIKE

" The proportional spacing and high score table immediately rang a Des-Des bell, and although it's no more than a polished Scramble, I enjoyed playing Chronos. The easiness of the first level is a bit of a let down, but it does act as a warm-up. The graphics are quite good, with explosions a bit reminiscent of Dark Star, but the game itself is almost totally different, and for £1.99, it is good value. "

► **Your ship (above the chimney-like structure) attacks across the seemingly endless scrolling industrial landscape.**





PAUL

" Let's not beat around the bush, what we have here is simply a budget shoot 'em up. No frills, no adventure, just blasting away to your heart's content. There's little imagination graphically, but the shading makes a brave attempt to bring life. Although aliens suffer badly from the shakes, and the scrolling isn't super smooth either, presentation is well up to scratch, with a good Design Design type front end and score table, and a strange bit of title sound (rather than music). If you're not tired of shoot 'em ups then this could be game for you. The aliens never run out, but neither does your fire power. "

BEN

" An odd little game this; well presented, it looks good, sounds fair, and other than the speed, which is a touch too slow for my liking, technically I can't really fault Chronos – but it lacks sadly in gameplay, and just isn't fun. I think Chronos helps to show that simple shoot 'em ups of this genre have gone about as far as they can on the Spectrum. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, M to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: Monochromatic playing area, using shading
Graphics: varied cityscapes, neatly defined, but juddery sprites
Sound: average 'effects' music
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling 'caves'
General rating: A just above average shoot 'em up, mildly addictive, but with nothing really new or invigorating.

Presentation	78%
Graphics	67%
Playability	56%
Addictive qualities	54%
Value for money	62%
Overall	55%

Reviews

SPY VS SPY
THE ISLAND CAPER



In the top screen, White's approaching a wrecked aeroplane looking for fuel, while below, Black's still wondering what to do with that missile.

Producer: Databyte
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Mike Reidel/ First Star**

Three missing parts of a secret missile are hidden on the tropical Spy Island – and you control an agent sent to recover them, in this sequel to *Spy Vs Spy*, a CRASH Smash in August 1985.

There are seven game levels, in which you struggle with an enemy spy to complete your mission: collecting the missile parts and wading out to a waiting submarine with them. The two spies, Black and White, are shown on stacked, horizontally-scrolling screens.

As in the original *Spy Vs Spy*, you can foil the enemy with the equipment in your Trapulator. Rope snares can be set in foreground trees with their nooses positioned invisibly below; spy-pits can be dug using a shovel, with stakes positioned at their centres and the holes covered with dirt; you can make bombs from coconuts and gasoline, drawing fuel from the crashed plane on the island. But always remember that your opponent has similar equipment . . .

Traps can be set anywhere on the island – they're sometimes beneath the mounds of sand where you look for the missile sections. And once a trap is activated either spy can trigger it, losing all the missile sections he's collected as well as strength. When a spy's strength falls to zero, he dies and the game is over; but it can be replenished by avoiding traps and by combat with the other agent.

If you find a gun, you can use it on your opponent to weaken him and spin him temporarily out of control. But the gun's magazine isn't always full, and some bullets are duds.

When the two agents are within range, they can fight hand-to-hand, swinging and jabbing swords – some 33 blows kill a fully fit opponent. Combat ends when one spy dies, runs away, or falls victim to a trap.

And you've also got to brave the natural hazards of Spy Island: strength-sapping quicksands, shark-infested seas and a volcano about to erupt.

To help him complete his mission, your spy can call up a map from the Trapulator (unless he's in the same screen as his opponent). A flashing quadrant indicates your spy's present position, a dotted line shows the last few quadrants walked through, and some sectors contain white squares showing where the missile sections are.

MIKE

" Nearly everyone liked the first Spy Vs Spy**, but I think this follow-up will be a disappointment to the faithful. The graphics are poor: colour is overused, the scrolling is bad, and while the black spy is appealing his counterpart is very poorly defined. And setting traps is only fun for a while – though fans of the original, who've waited long enough for this, might find it worth a go. "**

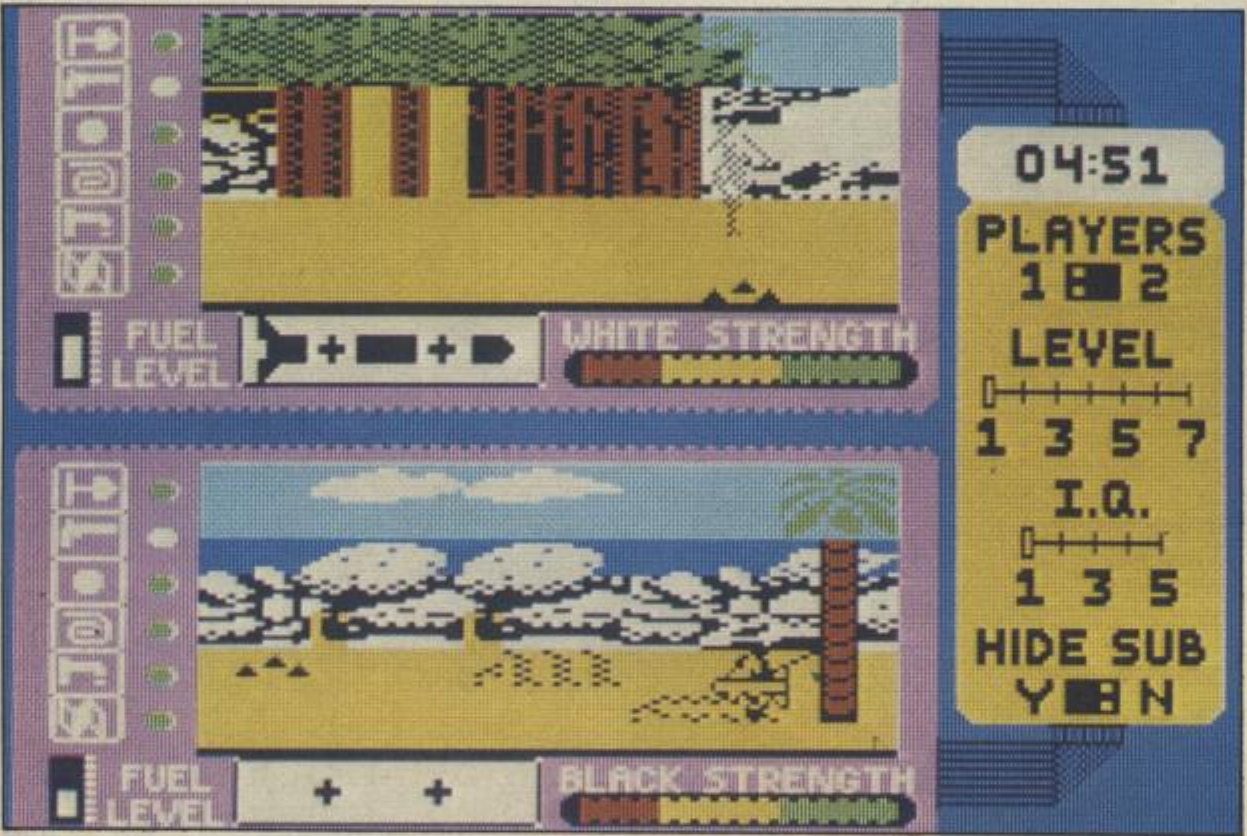
PAUL

"The first Spy Vs Spy **game didn't have enough colour, and now** Spy Vs Spy – The Island Caper **suffers from too much of the darned stuff! The screen layout seems to have shrunk a bit since the first game, but the traps have got more devious and much more harmful – and easier to set, thank goodness. (Even so, the Trapulator can get a bit uncontrollable in the heat of the moment.) The scrolling screens slow the game down tremendously; the flick-screen technique would have removed the need for character-block scrolling to avoid messy colour. The game suffers from a few bugs, like mounds of sand not disappearing once the hidden object has been found (which can be very annoying if you think there's more buried). Still, all the attractive elements of the first** Spy Vs Spy **are there, making it appealing to devious people – if they can stand the look of it. "**

BEN

" The original Spy Vs Spy **was one of the best games ever to appear on the Spectrum, and this could have been as good – but the implementation of the idea leaves a lot to be desired. It runs too slowly, and it's too messy to be addictive or fun. The graphics are marred by badly-defined characters and scenery – this and the two-character-scrolling combined with the use of colour produces a playing area that's really hard on the eyes. I'd stay away from this; it's substandard. "**

Black and White trap-setting fun returns to the Spectrum, but poor old Black, who's carrying a missile, he's stuck in quicksand in the lower screen.



COMMENTS

Control keys: Q or P/A or L up/down, Z or N/X or M left/right, C or B to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: too much causes bad clashes
Graphics: lareg and nicely defined, but poor scrolling
Sound: what there is is dull
Skill levels: computer's IQ goes from 1-7, and 7 player levels
Screens: twin-stacked scrolling island
General rating: Spoiled by too many elements, the otherwise entertaining game only manages to be average, and a disappopinting sequel.

Presentation	71%
Graphics	51%
Playability	46%
Addictive qualities	56%
Value for money	49%
Overall	53%



COSMIC SHOCK ABSORBER

Producer: Martech
Retail Price: **£7.95**

The Universe is nearing destruction – a minor calamity you may avert by reaching the Interstellar Lake of Protozoic Slime at its centre. But your CZ Neutrozapper has just failed its MOT!

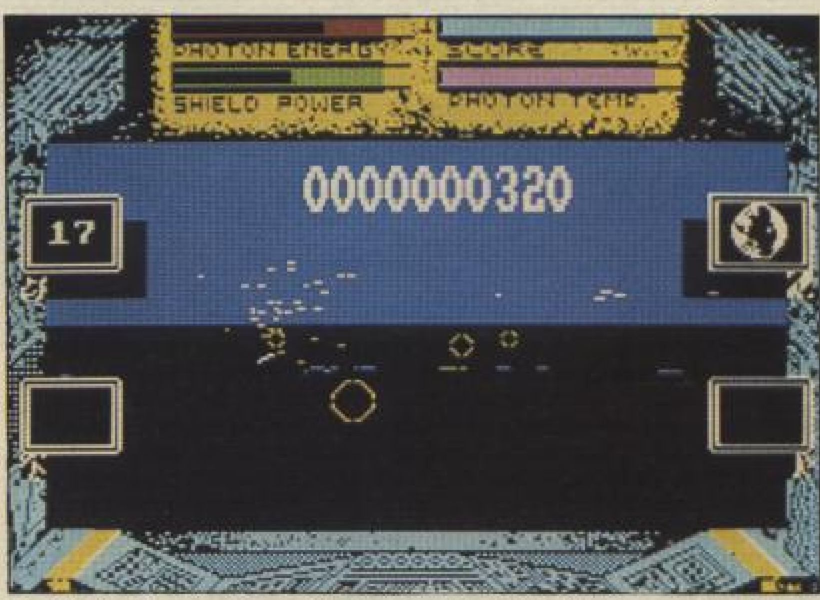
En route screensful of creatures are out for your blood, and the number you must destroy on each to progress is shown screen left. The Neutrozapper has a defensive shield, and a photon canon with limited reserves (and unreliability after prolonged use), energy reserves for both, and weapon temperature, being indicated at the top.

As your Neutrozapper's systems are likely to go kaput, malfunctions are indicated in a panel on the screen's right-hand side. To continue, the craft's circuit board must be punched up and repairs made, but as there's no maintenance manual and you can't tell a hyper warp grommet thruster and a hephalump's rear end apart, you've only got your wits and skill to complete repairs. Burnt-out circuitry is replaced by spare parts with the correct colour coding, which can be chosen from the on-screen display and placed in position in the circuit. A countdown indictates how much time there is to make repairs. If it runs out you and your craft explode and the hopes of the Universe die with you.

CRITICISM

● " 'You won't have seen the film . . . There is no book . . . Now find out why! (it's 3D blasting fun!!!)' announces the inlay. I'm sure any publisher or film producer worth their salt would instantly recognise this for the piece of unpolished trite that it is, and promptly sling it through the nearest window. The uninteresting gameplay is further marred by slow, messy vector graphics, and on the later levels attribute problems make an appearance. The sub-game has the feel of an O level teaching aid – again colour is poor and UDG characters are used to represent the components. Definitely not a Cosmic release from Martech. "

BEN



► **Another fine mess! Your CZ Neutrozapper's just failed the MOT and there's the Interstellar Lake of Protozoic Slime dead ahead.**

● " Battle Of The Planets *all over again. Except this time it's much, much worse.* Cosmic Shock Absorber*'s controls are very unresponsive, and I had great problems with the cursors – they just didn't seem to do anything. The graphics are tolerable if you don't want to see what's happening – The circuit mending is about as addictive as its party game basis.* "

PAUL

SUPER ROBIN HOOD



Producer: Code Masters
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Mark Baldock**

Maid Marion has been kidnapped by the Sheriff of Nottingham and imprisoned in the East Tower of his castle. If Robin Hood is ever to canoodle with his true love again, he must survive the many dangers that her rescue entails.

RICKY

" It's a sad but regular occurrence that a game arrives with excellent presentation and pretty graphics . . . but a rather tired game idea – Super Robin Hood **is one such. However, at the regular Code Masters price this combination shouldn't disappoint many people. Learning to complete the screens successfully adds to the lasting interest, as does the variety of graphics and music. Quite enjoyable, if you're not too demanding and don't expect too much. "**

BEN

" Here we have yet another platform game which falls into the deepening void of trashable Spectrum games. I can't honestly see anyone having fun with this for more than a couple of days as the gameplay is so boring. There's a nice tune on the title screen, but other than this the presentation leaves a lot to be desired – as does the graphical content. There are plenty of better games around for the same price – choose one of them and you'll probably have more fun. "

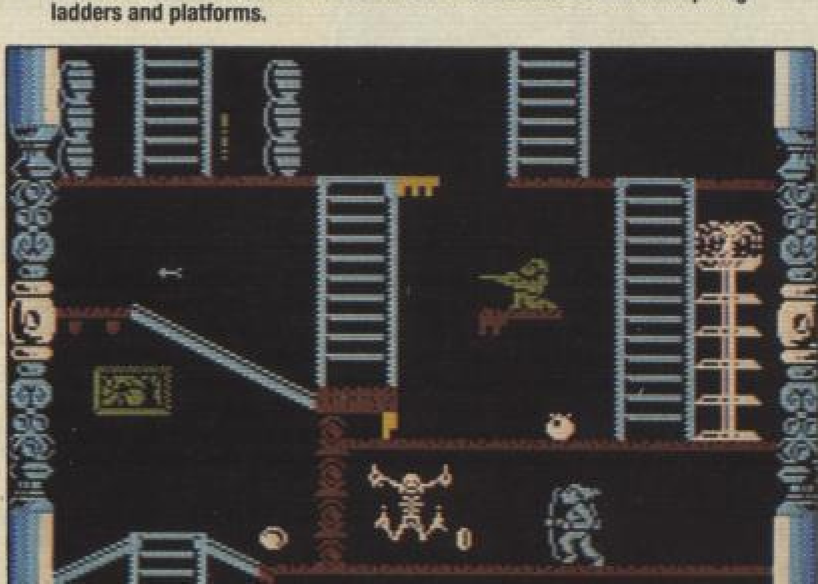
PAUL

" Yet another superbly presented Code Master game. The title tune is a great David Whittaker piece, and the options are many and varied. The graphics contain a good range of colour – although to prevent colour clashes the collision detection seems to be of character size – and the screens are smartly attired with some large objects. Super Robin Hood **is basically another arcade/adventure budget game with some good features. "**

Robin enters the castle and finds himself running left, running right, leaping, climbing up and down, ducking to avoid spiders, monstrous devices and the guards' crossbow bolts, through a series of rooms and halls connected by ladders and extending platforms. Pant, pant!

Bumping into nasties, or falling from ladders, loses our woodland hero valuable health points, and if health is gone Robin fires an arrow Heavenward and dies. But picking up the Sheriff's multivitamin tablets, strewn about the castle, revitalises him, as well as adding to his score. More points are to be had for each guard eliminated with his bow and arrow.

► **In search of true love, Robin Hood deals death to baddies on the uninspiring ladders and platforms.**



● " I needed an absorber to get over the shock of *Cosmic*. It's a pitifully basic shoot 'em up with a few add-ons. The keyboard response is appalling, making play near impossible. "

GARETH

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q-T/A-G up/down, Y-P right, H-Enter left, bottom ro to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: lots of colour clashes
Graphics: generally small and unimaginative with UDGs
Sound: simple 'blip' FX
Skill levels: one
Screens: repair screen and vector graphics levels
General rating: Outdated shoot 'em up spoiled by poor graphics and control response.

Presentation	58%
Graphics	43%
Playability	32%
Addictive qualities	39%
Value for money	37%
Overall	36%



Picking up keys enables him to activate the lifts, accessing higher levels, where more red hearts are to be collected. When all the hearts are taken from the castle rooms, Robin may move on to the East Tower, where he releases the distressed damsel and takes her home for tea.

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: reasonably varied, avoids serious clashes
Graphics: screens not over-busy, large characters and simple animation
Sound: good tune
Skill levels: one
General rating: Some mixed feelings, but reasonably entertaining for a short while, no long lasting appeal and certainly nothing new.

Presentation	65%
Graphics	66%
Playability	53%
Addictive qualities	45%
Value for money	63%
Overall	52%

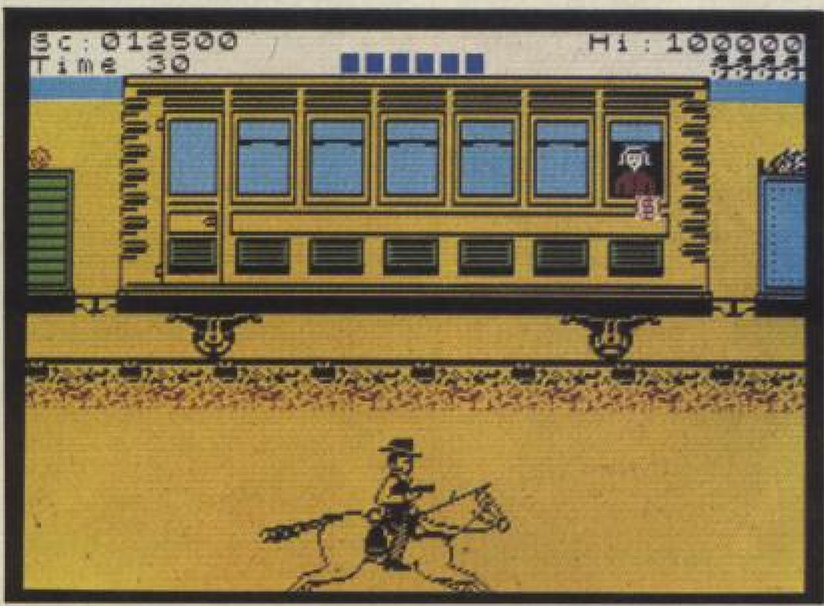
EXPRESS RAIDER

Producer: US Gold
Retail Price: **£7.95**

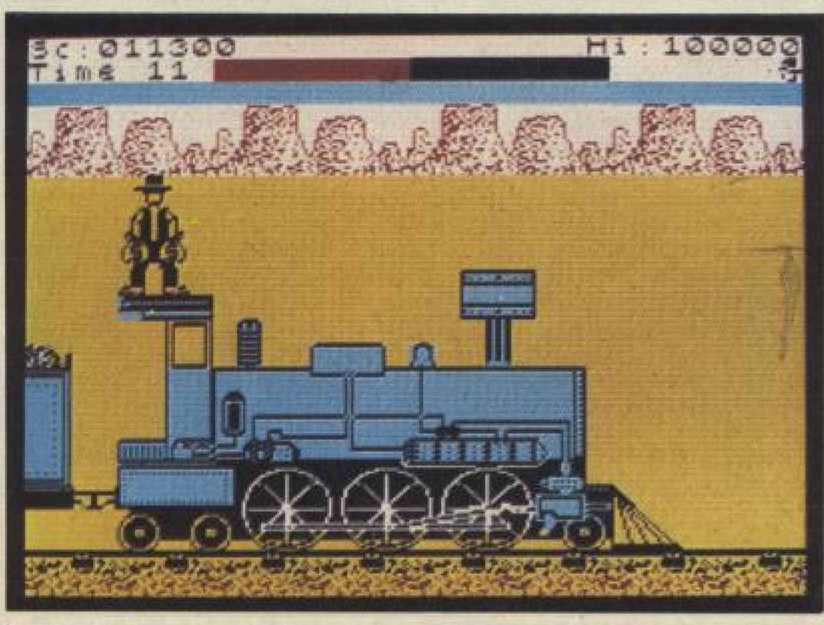
Due to a scheduling error, American Railways have decided to run eight express trains through your territory. As an underemployed bandit short of readies, you're certainly not going to miss an opportunity like this. However, others have similar ideas . . .

This shoot 'em up contains three levels, each of which involves winning a preliminary fight – leaping a line of running coyotes – performing a death-defying train-top walk, fighting off cowboys (who try to either shoot you or brain you with bottles, coal or shovels), and finally mounting a horse and having a go at another train.

To avoid your attackers, you can step and jump forward and back, leap upwards, kneel or lie flat. To protect yourself you can kick and punch your opponents, and when carrying a gun, plug them full of holes.



► Shoot the woman, take the money and gallop – there's Wild West gallantry for you.



► The view looks good from up here, Pard – waiting for the next stage (coach?)



Points are scored by landing punches and kicks and lobbing hand grenades, and also by shooting ducks, hidden targets and the lady in red (hit her more than once and you're dead buster).

Your enemies *do* fight back. Take one of their punches and kicks, miss a leap over a coyote, or get hit by a flying object and your strength is diminished (energy levels are shown at the top of the screen). One of your five lives is lost if your strength falls to zero, if you run out of time (a countdown is displayed) or if you sustain a gunshot wound.

CRITICISM

● " **Initially** Express Raider **reminded me of the wonderful** Stop the Express**, but it soon became quite boring. The gameplay has no real lastability, making fighting too much of a chore to be any fun. The sound is more basic than the arcade version, with no tune and horrible little spot effects.** Express Raider **does not deserve to be released as a full-priced game.** "

GARETH

● *" I've never been so bored,* Express Raider *just goes on and on and . . . The gameplay is repetitive and the 'feel' is very inaccurate. The idea of choosing your control type before you load the main game is years old and quite unnecessary, as you have to choose them again when it loads anyway! It looks tacky, and is much too expensive. "*

PAUL

● " I was I expecting a lot, but I didn't enjoy playing it at all after three or four goes. The graphics are colourful and look quite pretty – until you get up close. Unless you really adored the arcade machine, £7.95 seems far too much to pay, and I should stay well clear of it. "

MIKE

COMMENTS

Control keys: Definable; left, right, up, down, fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: limited
Graphics: large line drawings, but the characters are quite crude
Sound: poor and sparse FX
Skill levels: one
Screens: four scrolling levels
General rating: Thin conversion of an already unexciting coin-op.

Presentation	66%
Graphics	59%
Playability	49%
Addictive qualities	45%
Value for money	38%
Overall	47%

STRIKE

Producer: M.A.D.
Retail Price: **£2.99**

We're back to the Ten-Pin bowling lanes again, and, similar to the 'real thing', the key to success in this simulation is correctly timing the ball's release. If this is done too soon the ball's dropped, too late and your foot's flattened!

The bowler moves left and right along the 'top' of the alley (screen left actually), and pressing fire releases the ball. The alley threshold must not be crossed, doing so constitutes a foot fault and no points are scored.

You have two balls with which to knock down the ten pins in a 'frame', with a point scored per toppled pin. Pins still standing after a delivery are displayed on an inset top left of the screen. A 'strike' is scored when all ten are felled with the first ball of a frame. This earns ten points, plus a bonus of the score from your next two balls. Demolishing all ten pins with both balls is a 'spare', earning a bonus of the score from your next ball.

The score per frame and a running total over all frames is displayed at the bottom of the screen, the winner being the bowler who accumulates the most points at the end of ten frames.

CRITICISM

● **" Strike can hardly be described as a masterpiece, the gameplay is simple to the point of being tedious and high scores are achieved much too easily. Your character shuffles around fairly well and the view of the pins is a nice touch, but the graphics are fairly bland. The major problem is that the simulation is unrealistic – the pins don't fall logically and more often than not they fall in the same pattern no matter where your ball strikes. This would be a nice addition to a compilation package, but I wouldn't recommend it as a game in its own right. "**

BEN

● *" To say that I disliked* Strike *is an understatement. The whole impression of the game is very bare – the graphics show poor perspective and little imagination. Using the one-screen format is a bad choice – it removes the worry of whether you've put on enough spin or not – but there isn't any spin option so that detracts even more. The computer's a strange opponent too, varying from four or five strikes in a row and then missing the pins completely for the rest of the frames. "*

PAUL

● " This is the third Ten-Pin bowling simulation to appear on the Spectrum. I don't particularly like the way in which the action is viewed – everything happens on one screen which means the pins are displayed in a scrunched up box at the top. Controlling the player proves awkward, however positions are soon learned and some degree of control can then be accomplished. A program for dedicated Ten-Pin fans only. "

RICKY

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: restricted; brown, black and white
Graphics: good bowler sprite, otherwise uniformly simple
Sound: nothing inspiring
Skill levels: one
Screens: one (plus inset)
General rating: A disappointing simulation which has opted for the obvious, to its own cost.

Presentation	53%
Graphics	52%
Playability	43%
Addictive qualities	37%
Value for money	45%
Overall	40%

▶ And aiming at the pins, it's ace ten-pin bowler Cameron. Note that smooth flick – wrist style.





▶ The porky characters can be effective, but they lack the charisma of the coin-op original.

MARIO BROS

Producer: Ocean
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Choice Software**

Winning freedom from a nearby game park, creatures enter the factory where Mario is visiting his brother Luigi. Both set about removing the invading animals from their platform game world.

The brothers move left and right along the multi-level floors trying to dislodge the turtles, crabs and flies whilst not losing their own footing on the floors, as their sideways momentum can carry them over an edge, onto a lower level and into the path of an oncoming beast. But Mario and Luigi can move to higher levels or drop down to lower ones as they choose.

The creatures, their numbers increasing with time, appear from pipes on the top floor, and touching one, or one of the large rotating discs, causes a brother to lose one of his three lives.

Creatures are disabled by jumping up and head-butting the underside of floors which bulge upward. This knocks the pests onto their backs when they can then be kicked to the ground below, otherwise they recover and can knock the brothers off. Be careful however, a second thump can right them and once more they set off. The POW marker on the first floor can be used to stun all creatures on screen, so they can be kicked off cleanly. With all of the creatures removed, the next screen is reached. There's an extra life earned for reaching 30,000 points.

CRITICISM

● **" Compelling platform games are few and far between these days which is strange as most games on the Spectrum a few years ago were of this format.** Mario Bros **could have easily been very good, so it's a pity that it isn't. Generally the whole game seems to lack the polish of a completed product – front end excluded. The graphics are simple but sloppy – porky characters are a nice idea but they've been badly defined so they look messy and the platforms, are merely platforms. A few more sound effects during the game wouldn't go amiss as they'd add a lot of much needed atmosphere. "**

BEN

● *" I had no fun playing* Mario Bros *whatsoever. The game is just so terribly boring. All the screens are of the same basic layout, and once you've found the 'safe' place it holds no more challenge. The graphics are badly and unimaginatively drawn. Playability is poor, and further limited by terrible collision detection. This isn't a patch on the arcade version. Your hard earned pennies would be better spent elsewhere. "*

PAUL

● " I couldn't believe how simple this game was; I couldn't find any plot, and I've yet to see more concise instructions. I was expecting, consequently, one of those games whose attraction lies in its simplicity; I suppose that applies to *Mario Bros* to an extent, but there isn't all that much attraction anyway! The graphics aren't very bad, but the characters look squashed, and the turtles are a bit chunky; colour isn't used that well, either. Overall, not bad, but for eight quid, I expect a good deal more than a simple platform game. "

MIKE

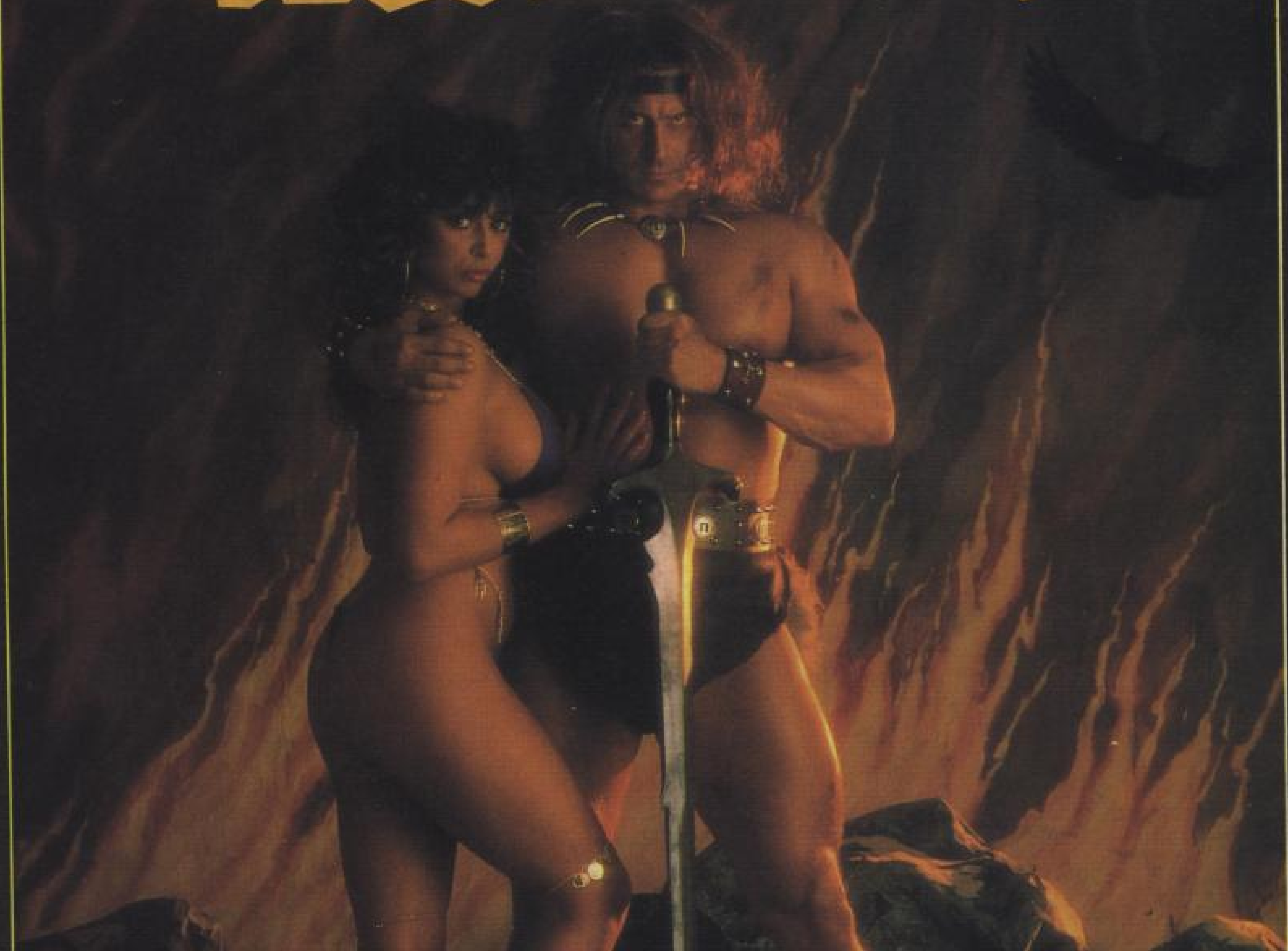
COMMENTS

Control keys: A/S left/right, Space to jump
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2, Cursor
Use of colour: limited, generally simple
Graphics: porky sprites
Sound: thin on FX
Skill levels: one; one or two players may take part
Screens: one layout, different nasties
General rating: Lifeless conversion of a simple coin-op, the appeal of which lay in its cute characters.

Presentation	68%
Graphics	59%
Playability	43%
Addictive qualities	47%
Value for money	41%
Overall	45%

BARBARIAN

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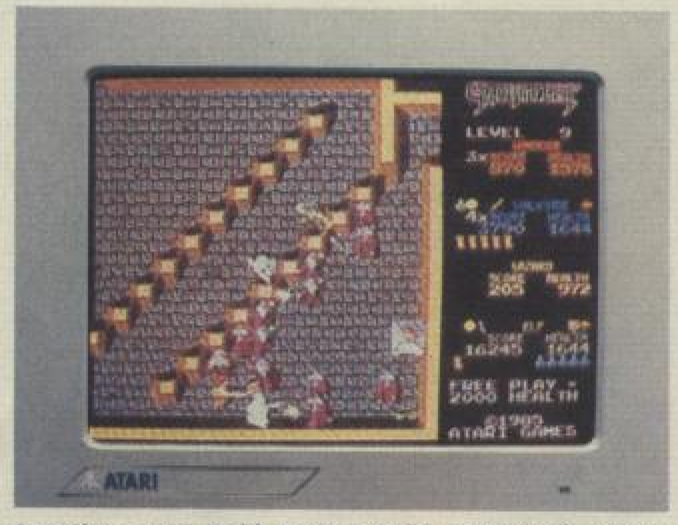
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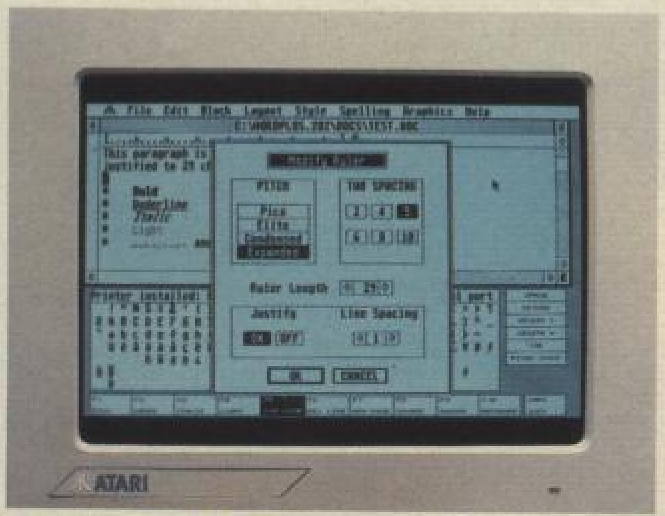
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*Screenshots a

But it's not all fun and games.



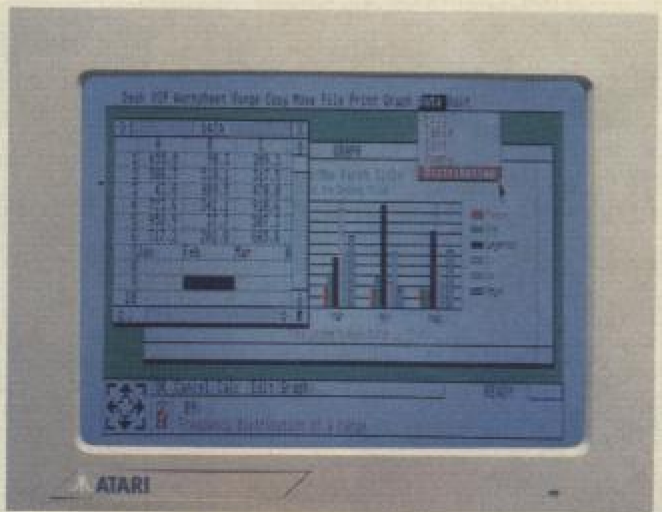
1st Word Plus – G.S.T. Professional word processor featuring U.K. spellings and integration of graphics including 1st Mail for full control of form letters etc.



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Reviews

STAR RUNNER

Producer: Code Masters
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Christian Urquhart**

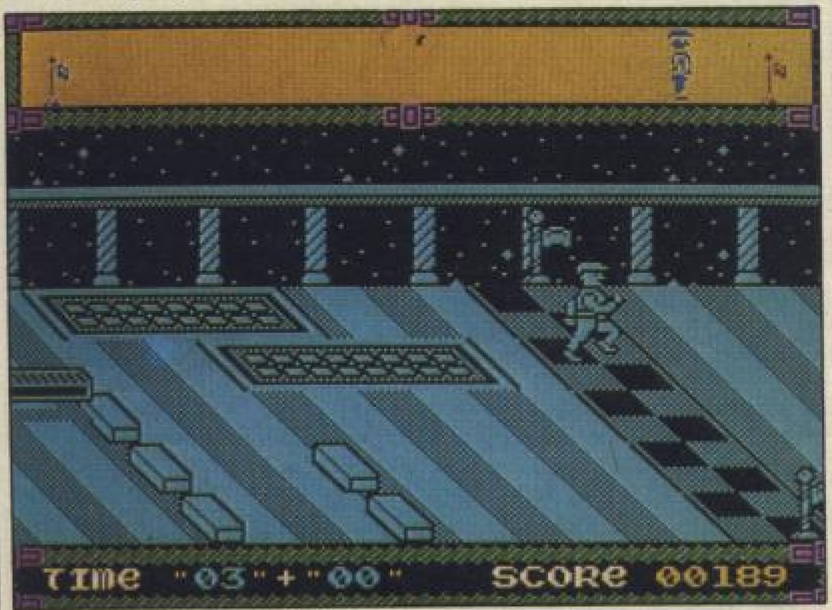
Here's your chance to develop interplanetary athlete's foot, by representing Earth in the Olympic Games – one century in the future. In this far off contest the traditional Marathon has been replaced by Star Running, a distance event set on a floating space platform. You are Earth's champion, and represent the planet against the cream of alien athletes.

The Star Run is a race of no fixed distance – the runner who travels furthest accumulates most points, and thus wins. The score is shown at the bottom right of the screen.

Your character moves automatically, with your task being to guide him left and right, and make him stop and jump as necessary. Jumping allows time wasting obstacles to be avoided – open pits trip, some surfaces cause slow running, fire pits return you down the course and teleport pads take you even further. A continual update of your course position is displayed at the top of the screen, with a flashing message displayed on reaching the half-way point.

There is a specified time limit for each of the six infinitely repeating levels, with the time remaining shown at the bottom left. Crossing the finish line allows the next stage to be reached, and extra time is gained by picking up the clocks which are found en route.

▶ It's a long trudge for an erstwhile Star Runner.



CRITICISM

● **" What a totally useless concept. Let's face it, running around and jumping over hazards isn't exactly an exciting gameplan to begin with, so the action could hardly be very compelling. The thing is that** Star Runner **has been very well implemented, it looks slick and is adequately presented, giving the overall impression of being a neat little game – and if there was more content it would be. Sadly, in its present form it's about as compelling as watching paint dry . . . stay well clear. "**

BEN

● *" As with all Code Masters games,* Star Runner *contains some very slick presentation – but the content is very thin. What kind of an Olympic event are you competing in? One without opponents, but with fires to jump over, and holes to fall in! Not really in the Olympic spirit, is it? The perspective is very misleading, and the childish comments at the end of the screens ('Would a pair of crutches help?' for instance) are boring. A totally unaddictive game, for which even two pounds is too much. "*

PAUL

COMMENTS

Control keys: S left, X right, H stop, SPACE jump
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Use of colour: mainly monochromatic playing area with colourful front end
Graphics: basic, but strangely pretty
Sound: uninspired spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: six
General rating: A race against time that goes nowhere in particular.

Presentation	69%
Graphics	57%
Playability	44%
Addictive qualities	42%
Value for money	55%
Overall	50%

TUBARUBA

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Tooba Zaidi**

Naughty Tubaruba's always in trouble at school, but this time it looks really serious. He's broken a window, been caught by the headmaster and faced with expulsion unless he pays a £50 damages bill. However, if the trainee delinquent collects this amount by the end of term he'll not only achieve good grades, he'll also wind up owning the headmaster's Ferrari!

In his financial search, Tuba passes through a series of rooms on different floors collecting money as he goes. He can move left and right, jump up or leap down in the school buildings he hates so much. To make his task that much harder, bomb-dropping angels, egg-laying ducks, deadly ball-spitting heads, octopuses, and musical instruments fly about. Contact with any of these saps energy, which is replaced by collecting the red discs found lying about the school. Should his energy level fall to zero, Tubaruba is permanently wiped off the school register.

Overactivity also depletes Tuba's energy, so to rest his legs he drives about in one of the Sinclair C5's which are conveniently distributed around the school.

Tubaruba protects himself by firing on his attackers with a concealed gun. Each kill earns a penny, but his piggy bank fills up much faster if he picks up the coins and notes which are also to be found about the premises.

Leaping up to and touching windows transports the scheming schoolkid to another part of the building where he can continue his money hunt.

CRITICISM

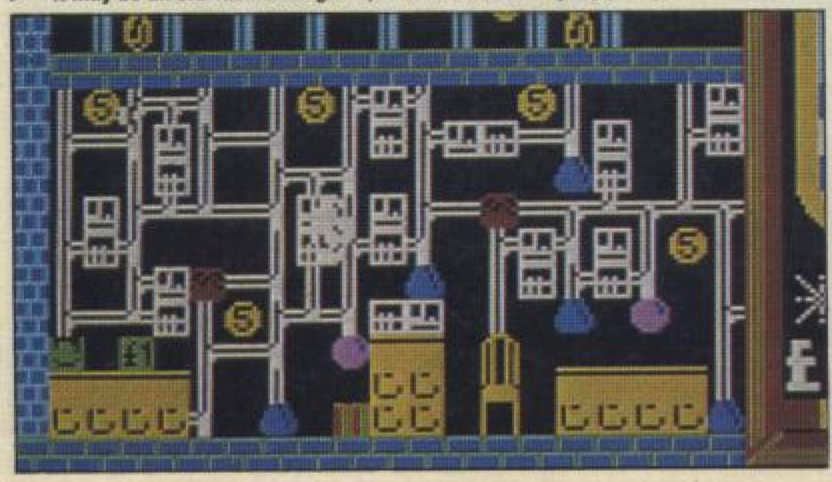
● **" At last! Spectrum lovers can now have a loading system just like (dare I say it!) . . . the good old BBC. I'm not sure I like this, but it does solve a lot of problems – and once you've finally got** Tubaruba **to load it isn't at all bad. The graphics are a bit basic, but they're well constructed and use lots of colour."**

GARETH

● *" If Firebird think that this is the sort of game that Spectrum owners want then they're still living in 1984 . . . it's absolutely appalling. The tune that plays during and after the game is atrocious – the graphics consist of some badly drawn furniture and backgrounds, and contain masses of colour, none of which is aesthetically pleasing. A complete waste of money. "*

PAUL

▶ It may be an old-fashioned game, but Tubaruba is brightly pretty to look at.



COMMENTS

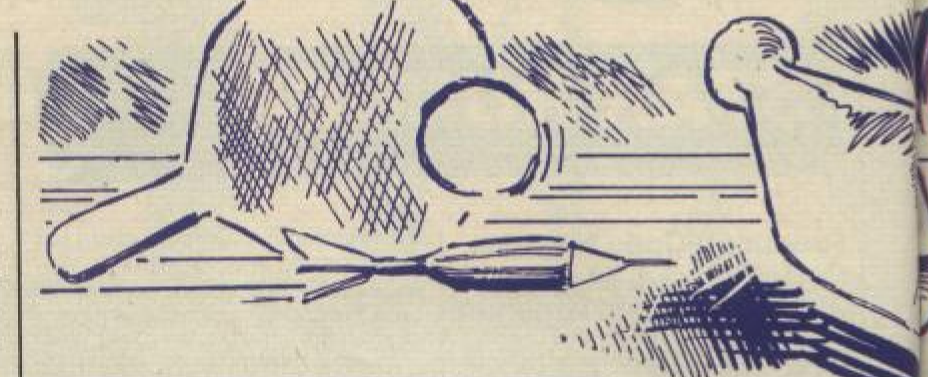
Control keys: Q up, A down, O left, P right, Z/M fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: very bright
Graphics: primitive and generally small
Sound: poor
Skill levels: one
General rating: This leap, kill and collect *Jet Set Willy* type game, hails from the past, but at its price it could have appeal for some.

Presentation	58%
Graphics	45%
Playability	43%
Addictive qualities	41%
Value for money	48%
Overall	42%

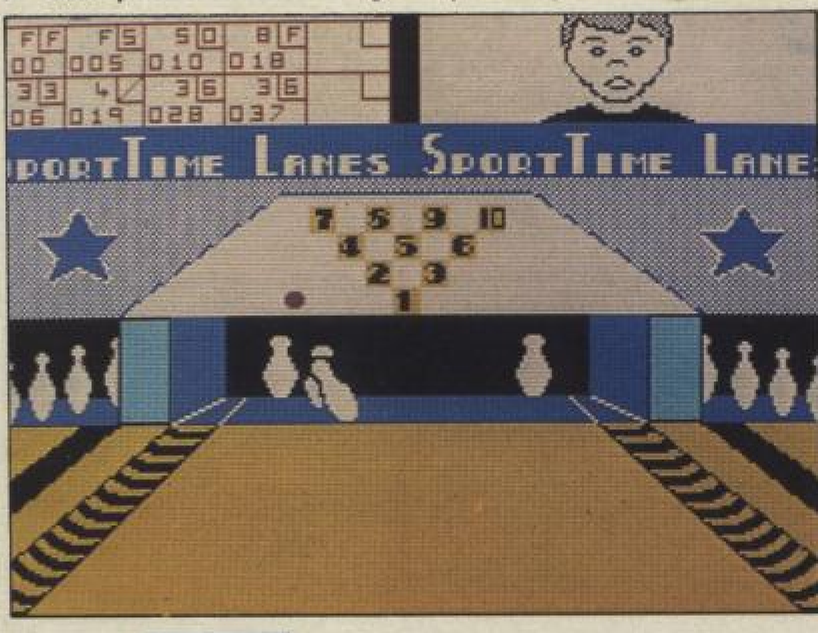
INDOOR SPORTS

Producer: Advance
Retail Price: **£7.95**

This sports simulation licensed from the American Design Star Inc allows up to four people to participate in a series of four indoor games. The events are two player only, with a second round being played if three or more competitors take part. If an odd amount of players are competing, the computer takes the place of the missing opponent.



► Close up view of the skittles falling in ten-pin bowling.



GARETH

"This conversion is very disappointing because each game is so easy to beat – it's possible to defeat the computer on every level after only playing for a short time. The graphics are the best feature (not surprising really, as there's no sound), incorporating smooth animation of sprites and neat scrolling action. This is not the best sport simulation I've seen but it could have a few hours of enjoyment in it. "

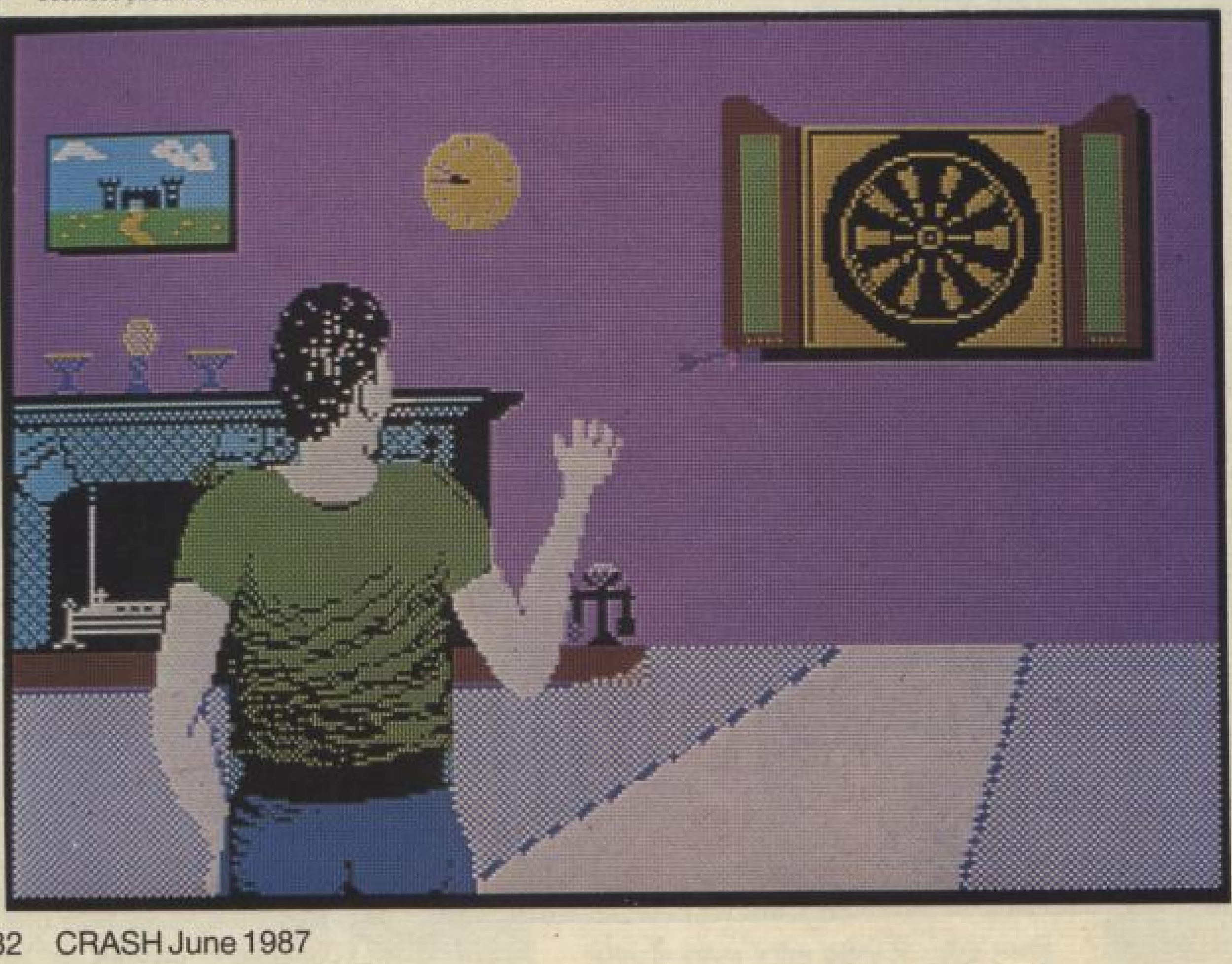
► Slamming home the puck in Air Hockey.



PAUL

"None of Indoor Sport's **four sub-games holds any lasting appeal, and all of them are very easy to master. The perspective of the air hockey is superb, and the action is smooth and lightning fast. The darts is the easiest game to suss – maximums being no trouble to get. Superstar ping pong is again very easy to master, mainly due to the dense opponent. Ten-pin bowling, being the best of a bad bunch, takes quite a time to get into – but again good scores are easily repeated. You may find one or two games that you like, but it's asking a bit much at £7.95. "**

► Cosiness abounds as the darts commence beside the hearthside warmth.



Air Hockey is played on a table with walled edges and a goal at either end. Both players are equipped with a 'hitter', which moves with the confines of its own half, to bounce the puck into the opposite goal or to defend their own. Three playing speeds are available, with a score and time countdown given. Winner is the first player to score 12 goals within the specified time limit.

The next event is **Darts**. An arrow is aimed by sliding it along the bottom of the screen, the arc of the throw set by use of an angle meter and strength regulated on the power meter. A thrown dart's position is shown on the board with a message section above it indicating trebles, doubles and misses. Scores are 'chalked' on either side of the board, with a running total given after every three darts. The game is lost if available time (shown by a countdown) falls to zero.

In **Superstar Ping Pong** the bat is moved either manually or by the computer. If the auto-move option is chosen, the fire button is used to serve and the joystick, or appropriate keys, to determine the choice of return – this can be using backspin, an attacking smash or at var-



BEN

"I think Advance have scraped the barrel a little here. The events (most of them not too interesting to begin with) are badly implemented and none of the actual 'feel' of the originals is conveyed. The badly defined graphics are marred further by the garish use of colour. The sound is awful, there are no tunes and effects during the game are thin on the ground. I wouldn't recommend this, it simply isn't worth the asking price."

ying angles. When manually operated the bat can also be moved left and right along the table end. If the ball is not returned onto the table, or hits the net, a point is lost. The game is won by the first player to reach 21 by two clear points.

Now on to bigger balls, this time at the **Ten-Pin Bowling** alley. Having positioned the bowler, an arrow is moved to determine the ball's direction and, using the joystick, its curve chosen. The ball is released by pressing fire at the correct moment during the bowler's swing. A point is awarded for each fallen pin, with those pins still standing shown at the top of the screen. Should the bowler ever cross the line on the alley, a fault is incurred and no points are scored.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Use of colour: plenty of it – a bit garish
Graphics: generally large and well defined with some good scrolling
Sound: none
Screens: four events
General rating: The sports chosen and their implementation let down some promising graphics. Pretty average.

Presentation	69%
Graphics	60%
Playability	49%
Addictive qualities	46%
Value for money	44%
Overall	50%

OCTAGON

Producer: Budgie
Retail Price: **£2.99**

You are an Octon, a creature given power by the symbol of the octagon. Trapped in the confines of a four level complex of 60 cell worlds, your only chance of escape lies in the successful building of this octagon from pieces held at the complex's core.

Octons move left, right and upwards, or fall under the pull of gravity. Each cell is populated by creatures such as snakes, spiders and fish, which move across the screen and increase in number with each successive level. Contact with these saps your psychic power, but for protection you carry a stun gun which temporarily vaporises your opponents.

To transfer from cell to cell, at least four tokens **(T)** must be gathered and taken to your 'standon' (home platform). Collected tokens are displayed at the bottom right of the screen, along with any relevant messages. You may choose the standon from which you exit the cell, as long as it is a neutral white or corresponds to your designated colour. The count at the top of the screen is reduced by one unit when a new cell is reached.

A teleport is used to transport between levels, but this can only be done when they are the correct colour, and when a key is in your possession. The position of this key is displayed on a scanner at the bottom left, with its number showing which level you presently occupy.

No more than one octagon section can be picked up and carried at any one time, and access is gained to the outside world when all of the pieces have been fitted into their appropriate positions at the starting point on level one.

CRITICISM

● **" I don't really know what to make of** Octagon. **At first sight it seems to be very good, but after a few goes it becomes obvious that you should be able to do more than just fly around a stack of similar screens. A quick read of the inlay uncovered a little more, but it didn't really disclose how to get deeper into play. The sound is poor: there's no tune, and very few spot effects whilst playing. Although I can appreciate some of the nicer points, it isn't really that good. "**

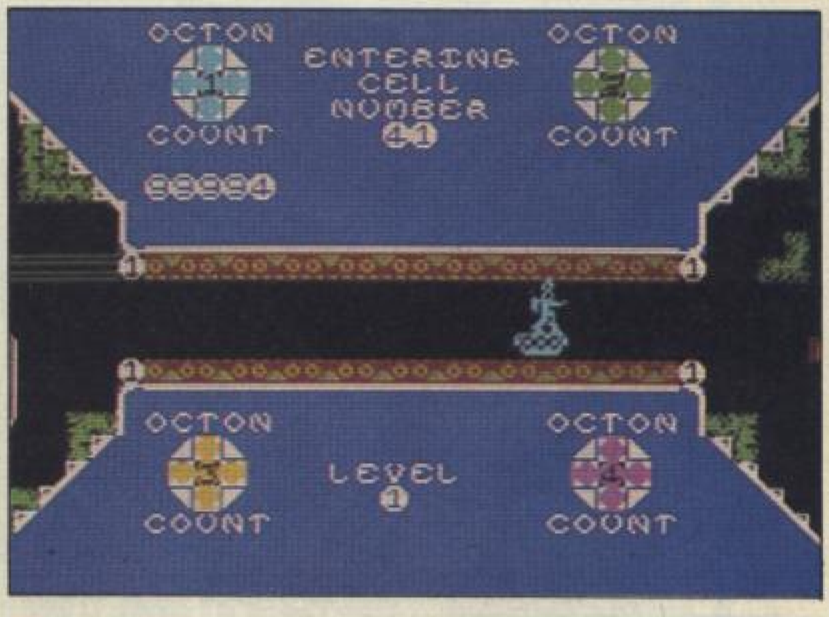
GARETH

● *" Things looked quite promising at first – the neat inlay, interesting scenario, abundance of useful options, a short but sweet tune on loading, some average but colourful graphics and the option which allows up to four people to play – but unfortunately the game is a great disappointment. Your character moves in a very jerky fashion and the interim screen that flashes when you move from cell to cell is unnecessary and frustrating – this destroys the flow and makes the proceedings very disjointed. The above average presentation increases the value, but unaddictive gameplay is a major let-down. "*

PAUL

● " I'm afraid I don't like *Octagon* at all. The graphics are colourful (almost too colourful in fact), but they look quite poor. The scenario didn't quite sink in for a while, and the gameplay didn't appeal to me at all; I didn't like the technique of pressing the initial letter of the action required. Finally, the 'arcade' sequences are pretty appalling. "

MIKE



► **Travelling between cells, preparing to enter cell 41.**



► **One of the Octagon cells, inhabited by creatures bent on preventing you from collecting tokens.**

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, N/M left/right, SPACE to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Use of colour: generally bright appearance
Graphics: a busy screen but generally small characters
Sound: reasonable tune, but few FX
Skill levels: one – but four players may take part
Screens: 240 cell worlds
General rating: an unusual game which appears more complex than it really is, and not very addictive

Presentation	66%
Graphics	49%
Playability	45%
Addictive qualities	44%
Value for money	52%
Overall	47%

GUNRUNNER

Producer: Hewson
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Christian Urquhart and Mike Smith**

A distant ice-clad planet is under attack from the dreaded Destrovians, with its complex plutonium pipework being the saboteurs' prime target. Others have tried and failed to eradicate these attackers – now Gunrunner remains the only hope for this beleaguered world.

Each of the game's ten levels consists of a pipework landscape on a horizontally-scrolling screen. Gunrunner moves left and right through this, jumping and kneeling where necessary – collecting a jet-pack allows him to fly up and down to greater heights and depths.

As he moves forward, groups of Destrovians attack from both left and right, moving in at varying speeds and heights. Contact removes one of 'Runner's three lives, with those remaining shown at the top right. On losing a life, our hero restarts from the beginning of the present level.

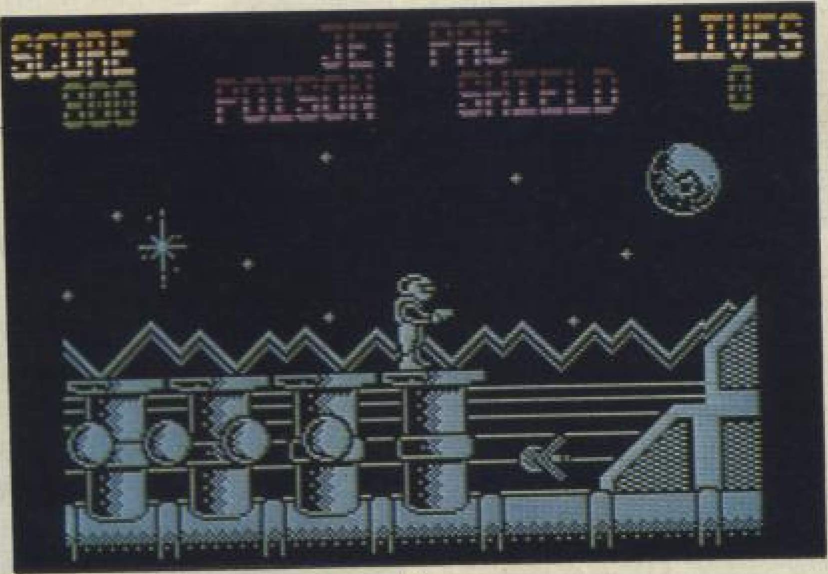
Gunrunner must also beware of dangerous gaps in the pipework; booby-trapped Destrovian supply domes; perilous, opening bomb doors; mines (against which there is no protection); and pedestal-mounted scanning orbs (unarmed, but worth valuable points).

A blaster constitutes our hero's only protection at the beginning of each level. This destroys aliens and scanning orbs, with points awarded for each and a total shown at the top left. A bonus is added when 15,000 points have been earned.

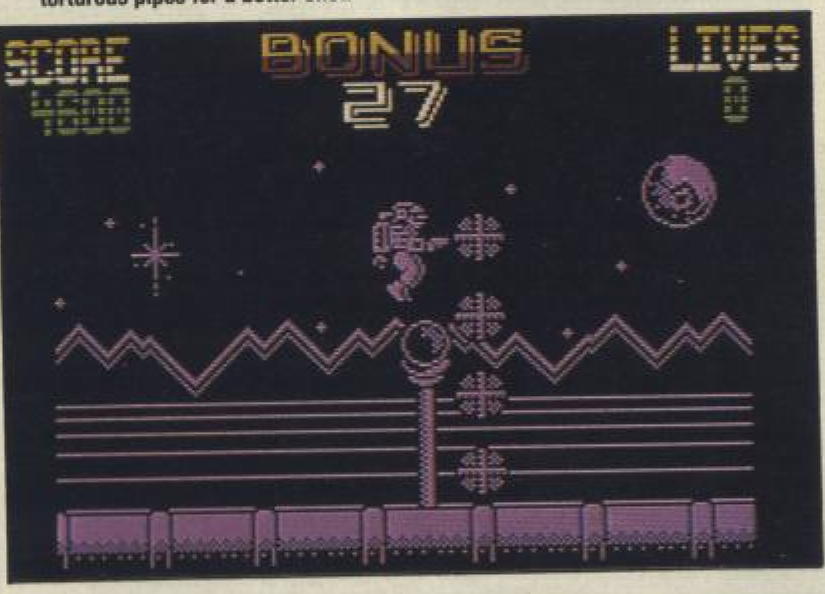
To upgrade his weaponry, Gunrunner picks up equipment discarded by previous resistance fighters. This includes; a Multi-fire Unit which converts his blaster into a rapid-fire tridirectional weapon; a shield with finite energy reserves giving protection against contact with Destrovians (a status indicator shows remaining energy levels); a short duration jet-pack; and a poison device which eliminates all aliens in the immediate area – but only on limited occasions. This extra equipment is acquired by touch, and more than one piece can be carried simultaneously. An onscreen message indicates if a jet-pack, shield or poison is currently in our hero's possession. In the absence of a shield, contact with a Destrovian removes all of Gunrunner's collected equipment.

A level is completed upon reaching the striped emergency defence computer. Gunrunner then automatically receives a jet-pack to help him fight his way to the next level within the specified time limit.





▶ Gunrunner goes in search of weaponry to aid him in his battle against the Destrovian invaders.



▶ Life's a mite easier with a jetpac strapped on, and Gunrunner can get above the torturous pipes for a better shot.

MIKE

" Hewson's considerable reputation led me to expect a great deal from Gunrunner. **However, I was disappointed. While the packaging and general presentation are all that I expected, the game itself is not; although I'm sure that many companies would be proud of a shoot 'em up of this calibre. The graphics are reasonable despite the scrolling jerking occasionally, but I found it lacking in gameplay, and consequently unaddictive. The format is becoming dated, and it's a bit much to ask £7.95 for an ordinary shoot 'em up. "**

PAUL

" Shoot 'em ups can be good if they're playable – but Gunrunner **lacks any positive points, and to my mind is a failure due to its unfriendly feel. The graphics, which are the game's most attractive aspect, are too squarely drawn to be inspiring. Sound is also limited, being confined to a few neat in-game effects and an average title tune.** Gunrunner **is off-putting from the start, and once I had mastered it I could find nothing to make me have another go. "**

BEN

" I'm disappointed, because this is the first unfortunate game Hewson has produced. The presentation is good, especially the loading screen with its scrolling message and excellent tune. However, the package is a little too similar to Uridium **for my liking – the monochromatic playing area, the alien attack patterns and the aliens themselves all bear an uncanny resemblance to the aforementioned masterpiece.** Gunrunner **isn't compelling or playable enough to earn my recommendation. "**

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Use of colour: background colours vary on generally monochrome playing area
Graphics: good definition, large, but lacking in variety
Sound: a bit thin on FX
Skill levels: one
Screens: ten scrolling landscapes of increasing difficulty
General rating: Something of a surprise from Hewson, normally associated with high-content games – a rather ordinary and not very addictive shoot 'em up.

Presentation	86%
Graphics	64%
Playability	48%
Addictive qualities	49%
Value for money	52%
Overall	55%

LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



Great excitement ensues. The Towers are to be invaded by one of the first ever Nintendo games consoles from Mattel. Could this be the end of home computers as we know them? There's a counter-opinion to last month's anti-Sega letter, and now we await to see whether the Nintendo is better than the Sega. Certainly, within a few days the offices will be ringing with *Super Mario Brothers* as everyone fights for a chance to put the machine through its paces, and no doubt you'll all be hearing more in future issues. Meantime, back to Spectrum gaming, and this months' Forum.

SOME SOFT POINTS

Dear Lloyd,
First, a large amount of letters published in your section have been saying that the vital component in a good game is originality. I think otherwise. I agree that it *is* important (it keeps the software industry going; without it the same games would just get churned out all over again) but it is *not* vital. No, to discover what really makes a game great we must delve further into it, past all outward appearances and basic ideas. I believe that it is the game itself, meaning what *actually* happens, and how well the idea is programmed and implemented.

For example, when my brother Richard (of *Frank the Flea* fame) first saw me playing *Lightforce*, he said, 'Hey wow, somebody's re-released *Space Invaders!*.' I realised that he was right. Now you can hardly call an *Invaders* clone original, but that didn't detract from the enjoyment I got from the game at all. I kept on playing it simply (no, not because it had trendy graphics) because I enjoyed the game. I thought it was fun to play.

I'll quote some more examples if you wish. How about *Head over Heels*? Or maybe I could take examples from the stream of *Gauntlet* clones, many of which have been good. Even the *Monty Mole* games can hardly be called original, yet they're successful and fun to play. See what I mean?

Equally well, original games don't have to be good. Look at *Psi 5 Trading Company*, *Doc the Destroyer* and *Terror of the Deep*, to mention but a few.

Of course, that's my view. People are entitled to their own opinions, and if you like original games, so be it. Richard prefers games with good atmosphere and aesthetic sense (graphically speaking). Maybe a good game consists of a combination of all the factors – graphics, sound, presentation, atmosphere, originality, programming, implementation and so on. It's hard to tell.

On to another point. Yes, it's the dreaded 'Budget games' debate again. How can people say they're all trash? Just look at *Agent X*, *Universal Hero*, *Feud*, *Amaurote*, *I Ball*, and quite a few others and you'll see what I mean. Okay, so many are rubbish, but then again, aren't many full-priced games?

It obviously proves that there are some companies in this world more concerned with producing a high-quality product which will please the consumer than with making a profit. I'm afraid that money is all people are bothered about these days, rather than providing a useful and/or entertaining service.

Anyway, if software companies do only care about their bank balance, they don't (and Richard will confirm this) know the real pleasure of producing software. This is the pleasure derived from the knowledge that there are people out there who are playing your games, enjoying them and thanking you for producing them. After all, they deserve to get something for their money.

Oliver Welsh, Northampton

To successfully make a profit, a company must produce good material, otherwise the punters fall by the wayside, and down go the profits. To that end, I doubt whether software houses deliberately set out to create second-rate games – but sometimes they come out that way. Caring about one's bank balance is something everyone tends to do, surely? Companies are no exception, since one of their prime requirements is keeping their staff paid! Whether such concerns overwhelm the creative spirit is another matter altogether . . .
LM

GETTING BETTER

Dear Lloyd,
I'm writing to you about a few things. Firstly the Hall of Slime . . . Scrap it! All of the people on the list have completed games that have been on the market for more than a fortnight so pokes and hints have been printed. What you should do instead is, as Steve said half way down page 43 of your May issue, print only photos of people who have completed new games such as *Nemesis*. I completed this on Sunday 29 March at 12.25am. You get the message 'Well done, you have saved the planet Nemesis'. Moving on now to *Academy*, I would like to know when Russel Mulcahy and/or Camilo Mesias completed it, if they have. I am also in total agreement with Richard Bailey about Adventure Previews, let's see some.

There's also a complaint, yes it's hard to believe but it's about previews – they're too late! Take for example *Nemesis* – the preview came in the May issue. And I had already bought, played and completed the game before the end of March, so could you explain why they're so late?

And finally, thanks all round to people at CRASH Towers for an excellent mag that is slowly improving each month, hard to believe but it's fact, by my reckoning anyway.

Neville Chesworth Junior, Cornwall

I'm still awaiting the last questionnaire results to see what answer has been received regarding the Hall of Slime and a Readers' Challenge, before recommending a revamped hi-score table. Sorry about the Nemesis preview, but quoting months like that makes it seem even later than it really was – the issue, after all, came out at the end of April. In that case, the review version arrived only days after we previewed it, and too late to stop the printer!
LM

DIG THE OLD POKES

Dear LLoyd,
Whether or not you printed that Cuthbert cartoon because I asked, I expected a 'new series', not a load of repeats. Please persuade Charlie Brooker to come up with some new Cuthbert cartoons (If he has, and you refuse to print them, then risk incurring the wrath of Nick Peers which is not a pretty sight!).

Why does Simon Goodwin only print Tech Tips for the 128/+2? I own a Speccy+ (remember them?) and I'm interested in programming, but I'm not that good. I'm sick and tired of hearing one of my friends bragging on about his m/c experience, etc, so would be very grateful if Mr Goodwin would not forsake the 16K, 48K and + computers.

I agree with Paul Harrison (April edition) about dedicating a page to old POKEs. You could cram plenty of old games onto one page (because no fancy loader is needed for the majority of POKEs). Alternatively, you could make yourself a tidy bit on the side by publishing a cheapo minibook (on second hand paper) dedicated to oldie POKEs. Think of the profits you could make (I would buy a copy).

Nicholas Peers, Powys
PS Bet you don't print LLangammarch Wells at the end of my letter . . .

I wouldn't dream of printing any such thing at the end of your letter. However, I'll pass on your comments to Simon, and to myself with regard to more oldie POKEs (when I'm next in the Towers of course.
LM



IRISH USER GROUP

Dear Sir,
I wish to inform you of a new user group which I am setting up. It is not based on a certain machine and has a monthly free news sheet. Members are welcome from all over the Republic and the North – not just Dublin. I would be grateful if you would mention the group in your magazine as I am having trouble finding members.
Ben Walsh, 20 Palmerston Gardens, Dublin 6, Ireland

There you go, Ben – a mention. Hope it does some good!
LM

RE LOGO

Dear Mr Mangram,
In the May issue I read a great big insult to the CRASH logo by Don Elliot of somewhere in Devon. He said that the brill and fantastic mag logo was crappy, with the two-dimensional sparky bits. But I, being a faithful reader, think it's ace and would be very very sad, fed up, disappointed and so on if the logo was changed.
James Simpson, Shropshire

And so do I, James. The Union Jack isn't the world's prettiest flag either, but I bet hardly anyone would want to alter it.
LM

UNREPAIRED

Dear Lloyd,
For a few months now my son has been without his Spectrum, the withdrawal symptoms are sometime painful to see. Especially when new games arrive and he cannot even try them. What frustration!

If only we had looked through the back issues of CRASH before we acted, and so begins the long sad tale . . .

One evening in February, I arrived home to be told the computer wasn't working. My son had pulled the interface from the computer with the power still on! Something, we later discovered, which was quite a common occurrence.

'Send it to Video Vault,' said my son. But I didn't like the idea of sending something like that through the post, so I suggested a local repair firm who advertise in all our local papers.

My son's birthday was coming up, so his grandmother said she would take it and pay for the repair as his present.

On receiving the computer, the man put it on some testing machine, and said it didn't seem too bad, it would cost about £25 and would take six to seven days. Seven days later we hadn't heard anything so grandmother decided to ring them. A voice said that it hadn't come back yet and they would phone us when it was ready. Two weeks later the phone rang and we were told the computer was 'Beyond economical repair' The next day, after my son had said he would like it back to send to Video Vault, Grandma went to collect it. She was told it would cost £10 for the labour. This she wasn't expecting and was really shocked, and said so. She didn't want to pay out for something that was useless so she left it there.

She went back again the next day with a friend, who ended up having quite a heated argument after which they were asked to leave and shown the door. She paid the £10 and took the computer. The next day she brought it to my son. It was still wrapped in the invoice paper. When my son removed it, he soon realised this was not his computer. That afternoon he and his uncle went back with it and tried to explain what had happened and all they said was, they had left the day before with it so there was nothing they could do about it.

We went to Citizens' Advice who seemed helpful. They sent us to the Office of Fair Trading where the man gave us no hope at all by saying that the item needed repairing, so we couldn't put a value on it. It seems incredible that someone can get away with something like this, if only we had sent it to 'Video Vault' first!
L Kirkaldy, Southampton.

I've kept on file the address of the computer repairers you sent your son's computer to. Unfortunately I can't print it at the moment as we would have to investigate further. It does sound as though you have been very unfairly, if not improperly, treated. But unless you had been clearly told that there would be a fee for examining the machine, the fact that it was not repaired (whoever's it really was) means that the company did not fulfil their contract with you. Perhaps a matter for your solicitor?
LM

FINGS AIN'T WOT THEY USED TO BE

Dearie me Lloyd,
After reading the 'Points of View' style article about *Arkanoid* in your May Forum, it suddenly dawned on me that things just aren't what they used to be.

The last game I bought was *The Boggit*, and three months ago I received the *CRASH Smashes* compilation tape with my subscription. Long gone are the days when I would rush into town every weekend to buy games like *3D Tanx*, *Handicap Golf* (I still play it) and *Lunar Jetman*, and swap them excitedly for legends such as *Jet Set Willy*. Those were the days!

I remember with fondness struggling away to load my copy of *Jetpac*, frantically fiddling with the volume controls. And when it loaded – Wow! It was just like a dream.

Nowadays, buying and loading software is like a nightmare. No one is safe from the traps set by those cunning software companies, and the price to pay is dear – £7 or over in most cases!

Still, perhaps there's hope yet – and I think the answer lies in retrogression (LMLWD). After all the over-hype that's been released lately, with snazzy graphics and no real game, out comes the 1982 favourite in a new form – *Arkanoid*, the 87 version of *Thru' The Wall* – and we like it! Yep, it's good stuff, proof that we're not all insane and taken in by good looks, (never judge a game by its graphics, that's what I say)

Arkanoid is but a simple game, yet it's intriguing, exciting . . . and ADDICTIVE!!!

I think that the software companies today are just trying too hard to come up with new ideas, and after they've given up, they concentrate on the graphics, and forget about the underlying game.

I mean, think about it. We have never had a really good, polished version of *Space Invaders*, or even *Pole Position* (excluding *Enduro Racer* . . . and that's on a bike, as is *Full Throttle*).

I hope that you print at least some of this letter, not only for me, but for all the Spectrum Users out there who are looking for a new direction. But, if you don't print it, at least print my joke – What do you call it if a cat gives away £1,000,000 and then gets run over by a bus? . . . Generosity Killed The Cat!!! (Ha,Ha!)
Douglas Irving, Renfrewshire

Yes, very droll, I'm sure. However, with reference to what you've just said, I noted that for the past few weeks the Spiky Haired Ones on ZZAP! have done nothing but play Firebird's Zolyx – a game so old that even on the 64 it looks like an ancient Spectrum grid game. I must admit I've been playing it endlessly too. It's so addictive I hope it's out soon on the Spectrum too. Graphics are primitive, sound unimportant, game so simple it's silly. Great game though. Food for thought, huh?
LM



INFANTILITY CREEPS UP

Dear Lloyd,
I think I have just started my second childhood, yes, I've been finally hooked at the tender age of twice key of the door plus two years. No it's not drugs or anything nasty like that, but playing my son's computer.
What great game finally accomplished the impossible? *Dynamite Dan II*. This was the first game that I took any notice of. I found it quite reasonable to get about by using the joystick (I'm terrible on the keys I find my fingers don't co-ordinate as well as they used to). It had terrific graphics as far as I'm concerned but I give it 100 percent for addictiveness. Any time I could find I spent on the computer, while my son was at school, and late at night when I couldn't sleep. Who am I kidding – I was that besotted it was all hours of the morning before I got to bed.
The only other game to give me sleepless nights was *Starquake*. I found this very playable. The colour and graphics were very good with not too many nasties to avoid. Having finished these two, I am looking around for something along similar lines, so far I haven't found it. I'm persevering just now with an oldie, *Atic Atac*, but keep getting killed, but never say die . . .
Mrs Iris Learmouth, Inverurie

I don't think your problem is as serious as you may think, Mrs Learmouth, and certainly a couple of Aspirin after dinner may cure you completely. On the other hand, perhaps taking the computer and monitor to bed might be more relaxing and less deleterious on the high scores . . .
LM



INCONSISTENT

Dear LM,
I think CRASH is totally brill except for one thing, the ratings. Supposing a poor game has average presentation and a Smash has average presentation as well, the reviewers tend to give the Smash a much higher presentation rating. This does not give a totally clear view of the two game's different aspects.
William Bick, Gloucestershire

I think you would have to quote examples to prove your point, William. On the whole I think the system works well, and Smashes are invariably well presented games (though not always), and this is reflected in the ratings they get. Certainly Presentation ratings vary quite a lot from review to review and yet don't reflect in the same way the Overall rating.
LM

BAG OR NO BAG

Dear LLoyd (alias Ivan Snotsky),
I feel it's my duty to inform you that a certain high security organisation must apprehend your humble self and deprive you of that loyal paper bag which has screened your face from society for so long. The reason behind our activities is this: We feel your behaviour of hiding your face is extremely agitating and causes a small percentage of CRASH readers to begin a spell of psychiatric treatment.
Underneath the bag, according to reliable sources, (NOT Hunter S Minson – no death threats please!), and many nights spent leafing through highly classified documents, we should find a very bald, lonely Soviet spy. SO THERE!
Alan Mitchell, Edinburgh

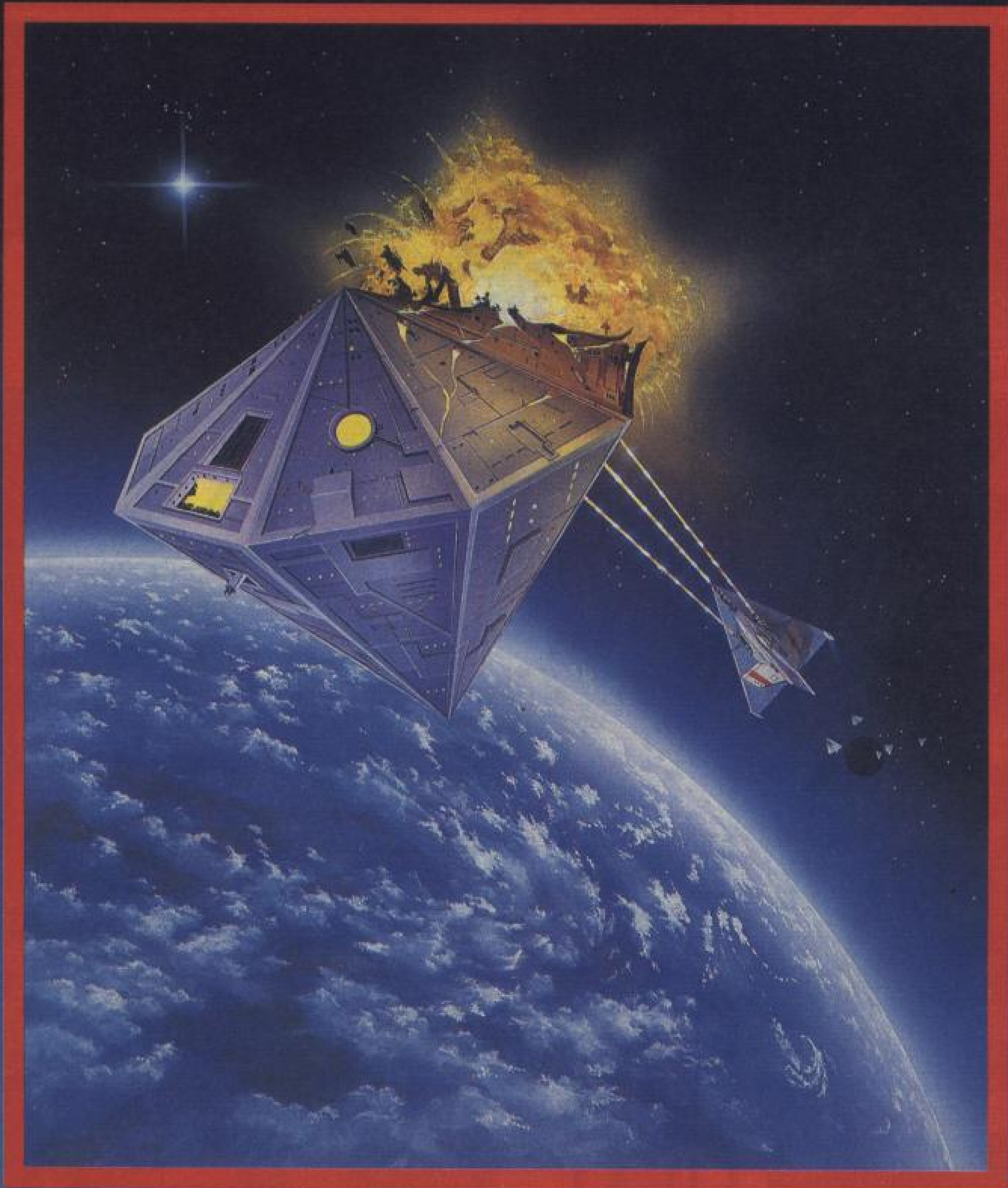
Rubbish! I'm neither bald nor lonely, nor do I work for the Russians (although I'm told they pay well, and I could do with a salary rise – hint, hint). Still, can't stay here chatting to you all day, I've just got to nip out and get a new supermarket carrier bag.
LM

NEW FANZINE

Dear Lloyd,
I am in the process of producing a magazine called *Spectrum Games*. I type it on my Dad's Amstrad PCW8512 and then it's photocopied and sent through the post. I work alone, but soon one of my friends (and maybe two) will join me. If any CRASH readers are interested in reading *SG*, then please write to me at: **Spectrum Games, 1 Maurice Road, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 1BQ.** As I have such a small workforce I can only cover 48K Spectrum games, but when my friends join me I will be able to cover 128K games and perhaps toolkit software.
Malcolm Young, East Sussex

Don't forget to send CRASH a copy for the Fanzine File. There's bound to be another update before much longer.
LM

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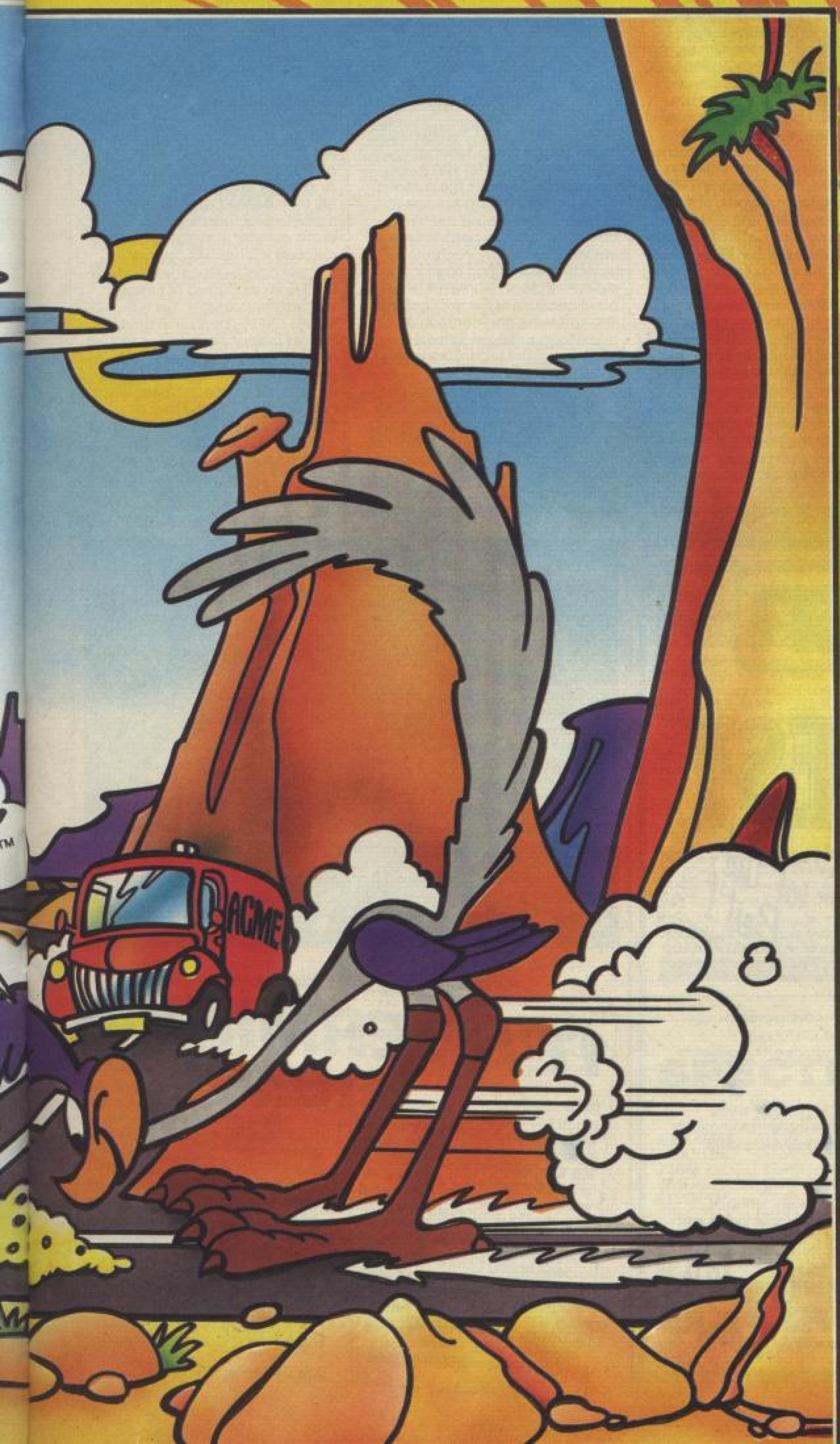
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HOW LONG IS A PIECE OF STRING?

Dear Lloyd,
How long do you feel the Spectrum will last as a games machine? Another one or two years? When will it be superceded as the micro of the masses? The answers are that it is anyone's guess. But let's face it, the Spectrum is an antiquated machine; it's been around with us for four and a half years! The graphics and colour capabilities looked great when compared with that great dinosaur, the ZX81, but they now look dated against arcade machines and many newer computers today.

Time has taken its toll on our dear friend, and I for one feel that it's time to move on to better things. I've heard that a Spectrum+3 with bolted on disk-drive is soon to be launched. But why? Instead of producing better and more advanced machines, computer manufacturers are producing revamped and up-graded versions of old machines; the Spectrum is undergoing its fourth transformation! Adding a disk drive to the Spectrum will enable you to access games faster, and to break-up games BBC *Elite* style – but who needs to do this when the 128K of memory is rarely used to any great extent, let alone its full potential?

This brings me on to my next point which is innovation (or rather the lack of it) in games today. People blame it on the film tie-in and accountants running many of the larger software houses, and I feel that this is true to a certain extent. But I believe that innovation also stems, or is inspired by the hardware. For instance many great innovations were made in the early life of the Spectrum – Filmation, platform games, Landscaping, beat 'em ups and so on. But the amount of innovation has fallen off in the last couple of years. I feel that the main reason for this is because the Spectrum has outlived its days. The whole microcomputer industry has stagnated because no one is bold enough to introduce new and better computers. How many new micro-computers, which you or I have heard about, were brought onto the market last year? The answer: nil.

Just imagine playing games on a computer with arcade quality graphics and sound, a large amount of memory and a modem which would open up the relatively unexplored area of 'multi-user games'. It could include such features as masking, attribute-free graphics and collision detection – heaven on earth for programmers! but it's not because such technology is not available that we are not playing on such machines – it's the ancient problem of the price. Such machines are usually found in the personal computer price-bracket (about £1,000), not the sort of thing many people can afford for Christmas.

But wasn't it Sir Clive himself that brought micro-technology in the form of the ZX80 into a price-range afford able by the masses? So, why can't it be done again? Perhaps it's because the microcomputer industry has become so stagnated that any computer launched would find itself in the vicious circle of people refusing to buy it because of a lack of compatible software, and companies refusing to produce software because of the lack of hardware sales.

But there are two ways of combatting such an occurrence. One is to make the computer compatible with other machines (Amstrad and Commodore are in a perfect position to do this) while still ensuring that the machine is substantially different to warrant calling it a different machine. The other way is for the manufacturer to support the machine by creating a special software house (Sinclair did it). Amstrad and Commodore are again in a good position to do this. So Commodore, Amstrad, all you budding programmers out there (and you accountants too), let's put the adventure back into the computer industry before it's too late.
M Furtodo, London

I'm not so sure that Commodore are in much of a position at the moment to create a software label to support any new venture. After all, they haven't exactly done much to promote their own Amiga in this manner. Amstrad's method, creating a label and buying in (largely Spectrum conversions at first) from a position of strength, was very successful. Yet in Britain today, the support for Amstrad games is very slender. A software house can consider itself lucky to ship out as much as 5,000 units of an Amstrad game to distributors, compared to trebble that of a Spectrum or 64 game. Bolting on a disk drive does *have many advantages, opening up new fields for games while maintaining compatability (hopefully!).*
LM

FOR THE SEGA

Dear CRASH,
I'm writing to reply to A Bailey's letter in your April edition. He put forward his points *against* the Sega Console and I would like to put mine *for* it.

As he rightly said the Sega will have much better sound and graphics. The Sega has 32 colours, whereas the Commodore 64 (for instance) only has eight. The Sega has a white noise generator which makes the most amazing explosions. Also, the Sega comes with two joysticks and a free game *Transbot*.

His biggest point was the lack of originality in its first releases. These are the *first* games to appear on the machine, they're not likely to be too daring. Anyway, can he remember the first releases for the Spectrum and Commodore, nearly all *Pac Man* clones and racing games?

I think that the Sega will take off in a couple of months – especially because of the superb instant-load cartridges and the Sega-cards (the Sega-card contains a huge 256K).

By the way, Ariolasoft state that they hope to bring out three games each month, I think that this should improve the variety.
D Charles, Leicester

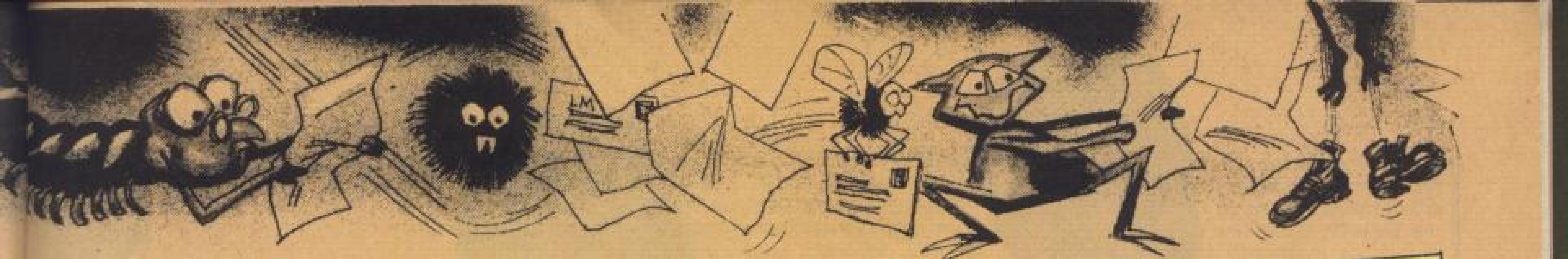
There's not a lot to do now, but wait and see what happens. My bet is still on the home computer, even as a games machine, because of its versatility.
LM

IT'S TERMINAL

Dear Lloyd,
It had to happen – you brought back The Terminal Man. Why? The Terminal Man is boring with a capital 'B'. CRASH is about Spectrum computer gaming – it is *not* a storybook. Now, don't come out with the usual rubbish, 'If we kept CRASH as only a computer game mag it would get boring.' CRASH wasn't boring before Terminal Man or Tamara Knight (which is worse). If I wanted a storybook I'd buy one. I don't expect it from CRASH. So keep CRASH as a computer mag, okay?

Oh, by the way, I think your covers are fantastic.
William White, Hants.

When we ran the first series of Terminal Man, the CRASHtionnaire results of the time indicated approximately a fifty-fifty split between indifference and liking – which isn't a bad ratio. It means something like 60 to 70,000 readers really want to see Terminal Man every month. We must listen to our readers – at least until the most recent questionnaire results arrive (soon).
LM



MODEST PRAISE FOR LLOYD

Dear Lloyd,
I Felt it was time to write again. First thanks for *Starglider* as my prize for letter of the month in November. I bought a 128 +2 for the boys for Christmas so we got the full effects of *Starglider*, and what superb effects they are! I'm 36 now and can't help feeling I'm a little old to read CRASH, but I still read it every month. It's even got to the stage now where I read it in the car, so I can enjoy it first without having it ripped from my feeble grasp. I got a new walking frame and batteries for my hearing aid for Christmas by the way.

I must congratulate you on your superb work on the magazine Lloyd. The Forum, Playing Tips and Previews are all well written, lively, and interesting. I would have thought such a volume would cause you to get bored with it all and just do the job, but no you're keenness shows through in every word. Well done.

Now to the point of my letter. It is in reply to Shashy Dass. Forum May. Shushy? Anyway his words 'an eight bit machine running at 50 m/s with no independent graphics'. Well Shashy you obviously don't program the thing. Mine is a good friend, a hated adversary, a person I love, someone who brings on bouts of swearing to turn the screen blue and something I could not now manage without. I call mine Speccie, (what's yours called?) and I have deep involved conversations with it. Of course it doesn't answer, it either rewards me with what I've been trying to get it to do for weeks, or it shuts down completely, refusing to allow me any access without a re-set. In truth of course I know a crash is my fault, but in my heart of hearts I know it's sulking because I haven't been nice to it.

Come on Shashy, an eight bit machine? No chance. A Spectrum is more than a machine, it's a way of life.
Paul Tyler, Surrey

I talk to my Hermes typewriter as well (at least the 1935 machine, the 1922 just wheezes now). It has been known to sulk occasionally, but whenever I threaten to turn it in for a Joyce, I usually get results. It's a question of being firm, but kind with them. Thank you for your lavish praise. It's a pity this page isn't in colour, or you would be able to see me blushing.
LM

MY NOVITIATE

Dear Lloyd,
I've recently bought a Spectrum 48K from one of my friends for £75. This included, 138 games (30 originals), a joystick interface, a microdrive interface with microdrive and two cartridges, an Amstrad 2090 radio cassette recorder to load the games.

At first, I thought this to be the best deal I could ever make with anyone, not so. I made an even better deal with W H Smith, when I bought the March 87 issue of CRASH. I couldn't believe it. All a beginner like me could want to know about software and hardware for his morsel of a speccy, in the shape of straightforward news, reviews, previews, maps and not so reliable advertisements, only to be expected, and all this only cost a quid. Fab!

First of all I like the way the ads are kept on their own pages and are not shoved at the bottom of reviews, this gives the customer, or should I say reader, the choice whether he reads the ad or not.

The idea of ordering back numbers of CRASH appeals also because I'm a late starter, and I could do with info to reveal the depths of my Spectrum.

The reviews are honest, with an ideal rating scheme, but a lack of colour in screen shots spoils it somewhat, although I must add that a substantial improvement in colour was noticed in April's edition.

One game reviewed lived right up to scratch. *Feud* is one of the best games I've ever played. As for CRASH's solution to it. I've got a much easier one: Get fireballs, Get lightning, Get heal, Get Leanoric!

In the March issue, I detected some tension on the subject of POKEs. I think they're great, and my thanks goes to the people who come up with them. As a beginner, it gives me pleasure when typing POKEs to learn more about the keyboard, as I have not read the manual yet – even more pleasure is felt when they work!

While on the subject of POKEs I should point out, as will many others, that line 100 of the *Gauntlet* POKE should read:

IF PEEK 32814=16 THEN LET A1=82: LET A2=184. The THE should read as THEN.

One thing CRASH, I definitely do not like the drawings in your mags of Graeme Kidd, John Minson, Derek Brewster, Philippa Irving, Jon Bates, Simon Goodwin and Brendon Kavanagh. They make people, who I'm sure look alright, look positively awful.

Lloyd, as I have said, I have had a great time using my computer with the help of CRASH, please could you initiate me into the readers' clan by publishing my letter in the most convenient issue.
Justin Coombs, London

And this was the most convenient, Justin! Sorry about the Gauntlet *POKE typing error. They do creep through occasionally. I hope you continue to enjoy CRASH – and keep writing in.*
LM

HOOKED AT 16

Dear Lloyd,
I'm a girl of 16 years who is really hooked on computers especially the Sinclair Spectrum. Your CRASH magazine had been recommended to me about six months ago, so I went out and bought it and – 'by golly' this is great, 'what colourful reviews'! Much better than the other Sinclair mags.

So I decided to save my monthly pounds for this wonderful mag. It also helped to guide me in the right track in deciding which games to buy. So I went out to a computer games shop in my area and bought a few of the games that were CRASH Smashed. And after I bought these it came to my notice that this 'crook' was selling the games dearer than the retail prices in your mag. For example, two days ago I bought *Feud* which was priced at £1.99 in CRASH, but in the shop where I bought it, it cost me £2.99. Surely he can't do this? It's robbery.
Jenny Holt, Northern Ireland

I'm not sure on the pricing structure in Northern Ireland, although I would have thought it should be the same as over here, but sometimes the retailers may have to add something on for transportation costs – certainly true of Eire (as well as the rate of exchange). I should go back and complain, see what your retailer has to say for himself.
LM

And another one bites the dust. And talking of dust, summer's here with a vengeance in sleepy Ludlow. The muddy, rutted tractor tracks between the idyllic hedgerows, have turned into rock-hard, dustbowls. As I cycle back home up the hill, away from the cool, breeze filled rooms of CRASH Towers, I choke on the rising clouds of dust from my bicycle wheels. Anyway, enough of this Laurie Lee style prose. If you've anything to say about Spectrums, their games, the people who play the games or the people who supply them, write to me: LLOYD MANGRAM, CRASH FORUM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. I'll be here.



MAELSTROM IN A TEA



MIKE SINGLETON, *Lords Of Midnight* creator, the man behind *Doomdark's Revenge* and the notorious *Games Pack One*, decided it was about time he spilled the beans. During a visit to Ludlow with fellow-members of the CONSULT programming team, he was pressed hard by RICHARD EDDY and BEN STONE, and answered irrepressible questions such as 'What's really happened to *Dark Sceptre*'?

'I got into computers through a business venture that went badly wrong. I took the computer and ran . . . '

When you think of a computer games programmer, you probably imagine a fanatical whizz-kid, Coke-swigging into the late hours as he develops highly innovative and exciting games. Such frenzied activities aren't usually associated with retired school teachers – and yet that's exactly what Mike Singleton is.

He stopped teaching in 1980 to enter into a business which happened to involve a computer. But as he says, 'The venture went badly wrong, so I took the computer and ran . . . '

The machine in question was a Commodore PET (there's one on display in the Science Museum), and with it he hoped to produce a few programs to re-establish his diminishing bank balance. The first game was called *Space Ace*, and it occupied a staggering 12K of memory. Written entirely in machine code, it had to be hand-assembled, a memory that still causes Mike to shudder. 'By the end of that I must have known every Op code off by heart', he says bemusedly.

Bank account still firmly in mind, *Space Ace* was handed over to Petsoft for marketing, and it broke box-office records when it sold around three hundred copies – a very respectable achievement in those days! But Mike's association with Petsoft and Commodore machines was to be short-lived. At the time Petsoft were due to sign an agreement with Sinclair to write software for the Cambridge-based company's new 'mega-machine' – the ZX80. Mike spent some time messing about with it, eventually getting a tiny machine code program up and running in its 1K of memory.

'Actually, the ZX80 didn't even have 1K's worth of memory', Mike recalls. 'Because of all the bits of bobs inside there was only about 750 bytes of memory left to play with!'

Before the agreement details were finalised, a change of mind resulted in Psion securing the software contract with Sinclair, and Petsoft were dropped; a situation which left Mike up the creek without a joystick, so to speak. 'So, I rang Clive – just plain old Clive in those days – and he told me to send my games along. I did, and heard nothing, until one day when I was invited to Cambridge to look at his new project.'

The new project was, in fact, the ZX81. At that stage it was hardly a computer in its own right, merely an Eprom fitted into a ZX80. Mike, along with some other programmers, were all given an Eprom to take away with them so that they could 'Do things with it.'

'Believe it or not', he says with the fondness of remembrance, 'the 81 had even less memory than the ZX80, because it had an extra 32 system variables occupying its memory banks, er, make that bank. I knocked together six BASIC programs which fitted into its miniscule memory and sent them off to Clive.'

The six games became *Games Pack One*,

A happy Consultation; Back Row, left to right: Consult's Dave Kelly, Jane Denning (Melbourne House), Consult's Glenn Benson. Front Row: Mike Singleton, Jo Meads (Melbourne House) and Consult's Dave Sharp.



EACUP

and notched up the kind of sale that today would be the envy of any programmer or software house – some 90,000 copies. Gratifying for Mike's ego, the success was even more welcomed by his bank manager when a cheque for six grand finally arrived.

Mike's next project was *Computer Race*, a horse racing game, designed to be used in betting shops when the racing was off – a little gallop which was soon stopped by an obscure law. However, the Singleton career continued with a few games on various machines for Postern, a now-defunct Cheltenham-based software house, the most notable probably being *Snake Pit*.

And then came the big time . . .

'I wanted to create an adventure with the same degree of atmosphere as others, but with graphics which really meant something.'

Lords Of Midnight, Mike's epic adventure quest for EMAP's newly launched venture into games software, Beyond, became his next game. He is still very coy when it comes to explaining how he designs a game, and especially those areas where imagination is foremost, preferring to deal in technical topics. When you ask him how he leapt from the arcade simplicities of *Snake Pit* to the atmospheric sophistication found in *Lords Of Midnight*, all you get is – 'Ah, that would be telling! Seriously though, I very rarely start with a concept or theme with an intention of working around that. Instead I usually begin with a technique and build a game around it – doing it that way you're sure of getting the guts of a program together first.'

Mike thinks that's where a lot of today's licensing deals go wrong: 'The programmers have the problem of working a game around a theme and then fitting the technique round it, and, as well you know, that can end in a real mess.'

'Landscaping' is Mike's own technique, and is the one on which his Midnight Trilogy is based. 'When I was considering the game I felt the graphics had to be more relevant to the action. So often the graphics in other adventures appeared purely decorative.'

Using Landscaping, a player can actually see his journey in real time, with, in the case of *Lords Of Midnight*, 32,000 views. From the technique, perhaps, came the theme. Mike wanted to create a massive playing world, so objects like spy satellites were out, because so many view points would be taken away from the landscape below. And so the murky Middle Ages were chosen as the setting, with all the scenes set firmly at eye-level and the landscape features seen from the player's viewpoint.

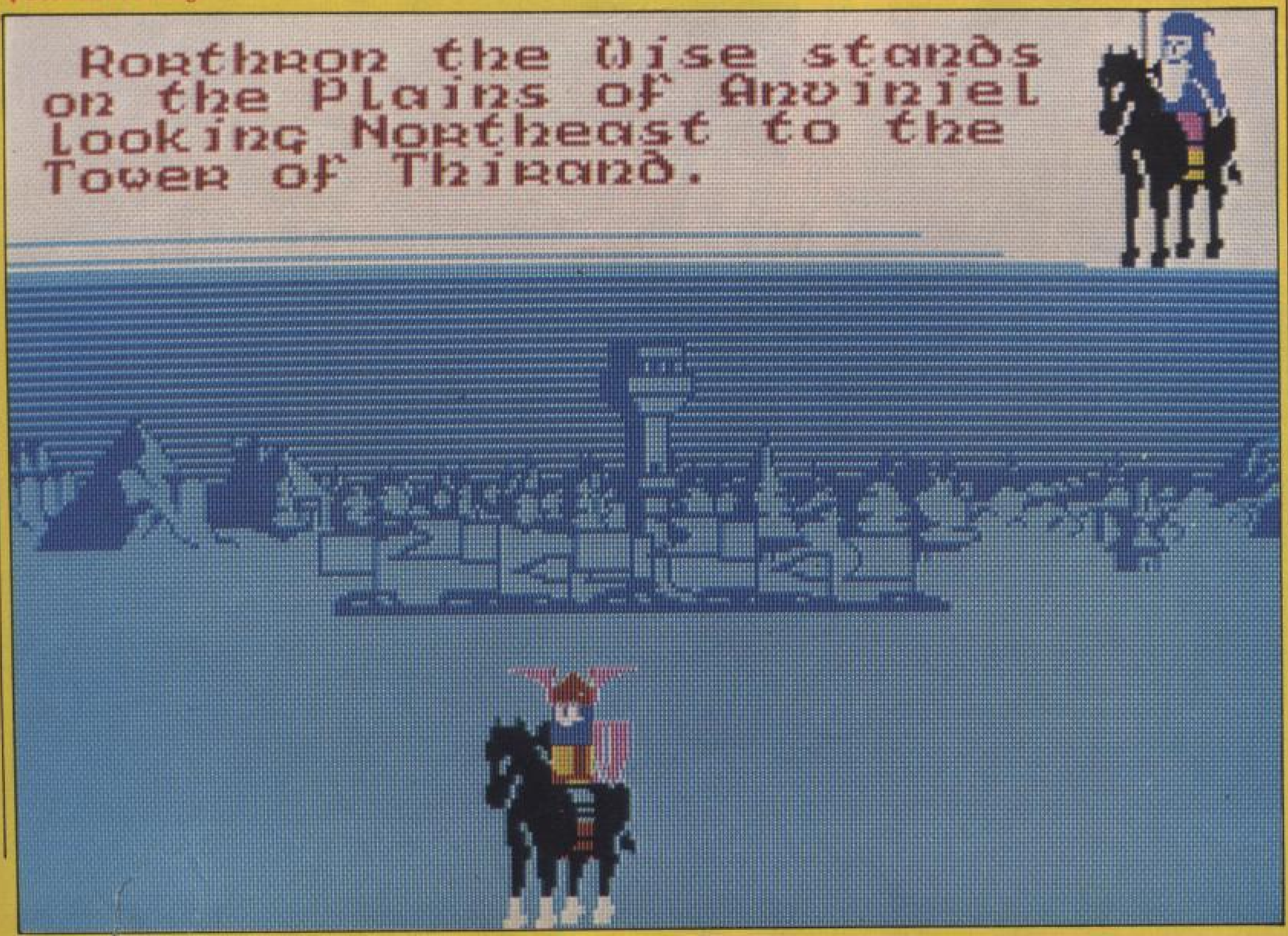
'The Land of Icemark', explains Mike, 'simply came about from the graphic capabilities of the Spectrum. I happened to like the combination of white on blue and so it fitted in rather well.'

Having developed his Landscaping technique, the *Lords of Midnight* game was planned. 'I plan the game in advance, but should I have a sudden flash of inspiration for an idea then I can usually find room to slot it in.' However, having completed it, Mike saw many ways to further compress his technique and improve the program, improvements which found their way into the next game. Work on *Doomdark's Revenge* started immediately afterwards, and although much of it was already planned, Mike re-wrote many of the battle routines in the light of his new thinking.

So much for history. Talking about the Midnight Trilogy made us wonder whatever had happened to the third part, *Eye Of The Moon*? 'Oh I'm still working on it', Mike exclaims, 'not so much as a project, it's more of a hobby. I've been constructing some new graphic routines so that the Landscaping should be in full colour. Oh, and the map should be about four times the size of *Doomdark's*.'

But *Doomdark's* was already pretty vast, isn't he creating a world that's just a bit too big

▼ Doomdark's Revenge



for one quest? 'There isn't just one quest. The map is divided into 12 realms, and within each realm is a mini-game. This means that *Eye* can be played quickly, because you can just solve one or two problems, *or* tackle the whole game. I think that was one of the faults of *Doomdark's* – it took too long to get into. Hopefully with the 12 mini-games it should appeal to a much wider audience.'

With regard to characters, Mike's intending to have even more in the game than before, but this time a player can select a commander and then make up teams of characters which are controlled as a whole rather than individually.

There's no date for completion for *Eye Of The Moon*, 'It'll be finished when it's good and ready – and it won't be published by Beyond, or Melbourne House for that matter.' So, that leaves one alternative – his own software label, Maelstrom Games.

'Dark Sceptre – oh that, it's nearly finished . . .'

Maelstrom was set up to deal with the Play By Mail (PBM) version of *Dark Sceptre*. Are we ever going to see the computer version? Mike says it's nearly finished, which prompts screams of merriment from the assembled members of Consult! 'He's been saying that for years – well, it seems like it', says one.

'It *is* nearly finished,' Mike pleads, 'After all, I've got you lot working on it.'

It becomes apparent that Consult (Dave Kelly, Glenn Benson and Dave Sharp) are having some problems because they want to keep all the original ideas from the PBM version in the game, and it's proving difficult with only 48K to play with. The PBM *Dark Sceptre* is still going ahead – but only on Microdrive. Which brings up the question of how many Microdrives are around these days. Offered figures indicate as many as 100,000 units have been sold, but as Mike gets through one Microdrive every year it's dubious that so many are still in use. However, the Spectrum Plus Three with its built-in disk drive may come in useful. Mike sees it as a possible re-birth for the Spectrum, and looks wistful as he says, 'There's all sorts of things that I could do with it – if I could get my hands on one!'

'Can you imagine a game with 16,000 characters, and you've got complete control over every one of them?'

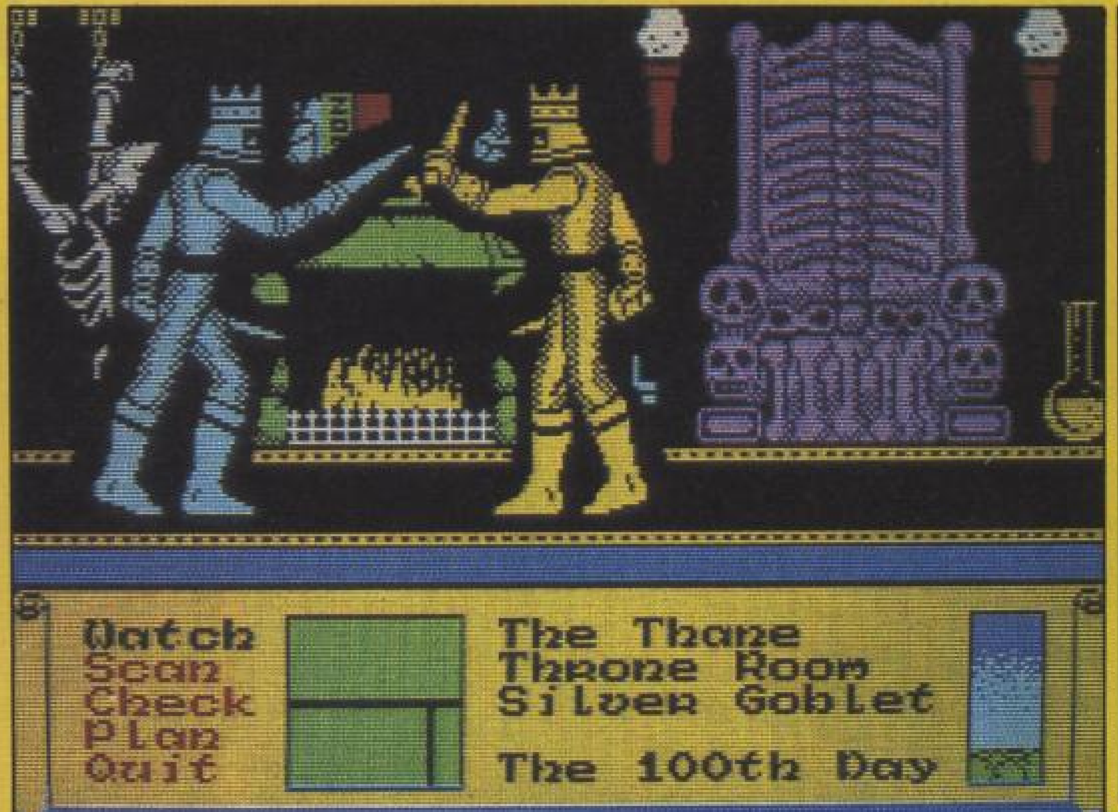
For Melbourne House, Mike Singleton and Consult are working on *Lord Of The Rings – The Arcade Game which, unlike the adventures, concentrates on the battle scenes. The player should be able to hold sway over the entire* map of Middle Earth, and control all the characters and armies to which they belong. Fights take place in real-time but, of course, you won't have a constant view of all of the action.

The 3D battles will be displayed in isometric perspective, having characters standing an average 70 pixels high – so there should be about 20 to 30 figures on screen at any one time. 'The control system is a very interesting one', enthuses Mike. 'It's possible to give orders by selecting a character to attack, move, or help another character. And don't worry, a player won't miss out on any of the fighting as characters are controlled directly – all ready to hack the opposition to pieces. There'll be a total of 128 armies, each with a legion of up to 128 men.

'As far as the graphics go, there's quite a bit of freedom. Some may be taken from the film, others from RPG miniatures, but we do have to work within the Spectrum's limitations.'

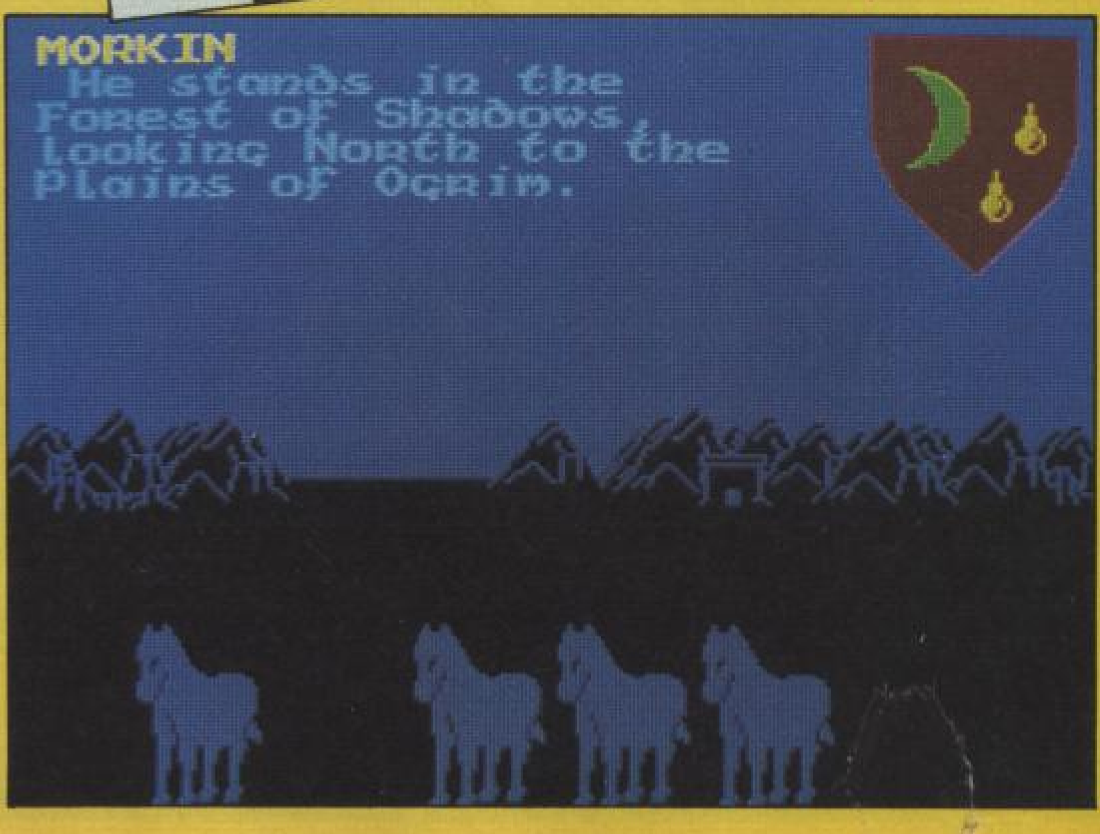
For the future Melbourne House have signed him up to do a few more titles – 'One of which,' he says proudly, 'is totally new. Nothing has been done like it before.'

Yes Mike, but how long will we have to wait this time?



▲ Dark Sceptre.





⬍ Lords Of Midnight

Pictures by Cameron Pound

Great Thrones Of Fire!

Win a day out at the LONDON DUNGEON

Copies of Melbourne House's THRONE OF FIRE *to be won!*

Crash Competition

Deep down in the murky depths of CRASH Towers, there are some places you don't go alone. Old forgotten relics are left down there; Graeme Kidd's Doc Martens (he wears trendy shoes now), Angus Ryall's loo building contract, and other objects of evil countenance that us humble comps minions simply dare not cast our eyes upon.

But there's one place that makes even a brave comps minion quail at the mention of its name, ***The London Dungeon****. A place of torture, horrific creatures and dark narrow alleyways – a place that you lot would probably love.*

That's why **Melbourne House** are offering an all-expenses-paid trip to **The London Dungeon** for the winner (and their friend) of this comp. And should you get too scared you can always hold hands with the gorgeous **Jo Meads** from Melbourne House, or swap scary stories with our very own **Richard Eddy**.

If you're not lucky enough to win the day out, there's 25 copies of the great new Melbourne House game, designed by **Mike Singleton**, *Throne Of Fire* (which received 75 percent overall last month), all ready to wing their various ways to the runners up.

Can your nerves stand the **London Dungeon** (or more to the point, can they stand a day with Jo and Ricky)? They can? Well answer the following questions and scribble them onto a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope and post them off to: **DRAG ME TO THE DUNGEONS, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than June 25th.

1. Was Mike Singleton's first game called . . .
   a) Space Race
   b) Space Ace
   c) Horace Goes Water Melon Hunting

2. What is the name of the programming team behind Throne Of Fire?
   a) Consulate
   b) Creative Reality
   c) Consult

3. How many views are there in Lords Of Midnight?
   a) 32,000
   b) 35,000
   c) 23,000

4. What was the name of Mike Singleton's illegal horse racing game?
   a) Computer Race
   b) My Little Pony's Slaughter House
   c) ZX Horses

5. What is the name of the King in Throne *Of Fire*?
   a) King Atherik
   b) King Elthlered
   c) King Grub



Lloyd Mangram PLAYING TIPS



SHAO LIN'S ROAD

Here's another, and slightly easier, way of getting on any screen you want from Steven Michael **in Eastbourne. Hold down Symbol Shift, m, n, f, t, and 6. Release your fingers from the keys on the desired screen.**

ARMY MOVES

Well lookeee here, our resident man at the keyboards, Paul Sumner**, has just found the code to the second part of *Army Moves* and it is . . .**
27351

Hey you! Don't read that, read this: This is the heavy hacking read! One POKE beyond!

Yes folks, Playing Tips are here again, and I think I've just about recovered from last month's massive Special Supplement, but they don't stop coming! However, please do make sure the POKE routines you send are correct because, try as I might, I don't always have the time to check through all of them thoroughly. As it is I have to type them in three times – once from your letters, secondly when I write it up on ol' Hermes and thirdly when it's typeset. So, spare a thought for my sleepless nights.



AUF WIEDERSEHEN MONTY

Infinite lives here from the wonderfully weird Mongee Boswell**, a good friend of** Dave Thompson **I'm told, to help you all say 'Good Riddance Monty' without any nasty sprite collision! Danke schön.** The Codebusters **from Sheffield also discovered this.**

Instead of typing LOAD "" **at the start type**
CLEAR 32767: LOAD "" CODE: RANDOMIZE USR 32799
When the game has loaded pick up the first object to the left and wunderbar!



MARTIANOIDS

This is what you might call a small addition to the smashing Ultimate Collection from last month's Supplement – only *Martianoids* wasn't a Smash. So, here's your cut-out-and-glue-on unSmashing Ultimate POKE that sends all the aliens packing, as well as providing the droid with 127 glorious lives. From Kilmarnock, it's Steve Smith**'s hand you need to shake – and also thanks to** Robert Strachan **who also came up with a similar routine.**

MERGE in the loader and enter . . .
POKE 46926,127
POKE 42812,0
POKE 42815,0
. . . before the RANDOMIZE USR statement then load the rest of the game.

SOUL OF A ROBOT

I don't know whether robots have souls, or whether androids dream of electric sheep, but a man's soul is better for infinite lives and infinite psyche, all of which is down to the talents of Glenn Hagon **from Reepham, Norwich.**

MERGE "" in the basic loader and enter POKE 23788,201. Type RUN and start the tape. The remainder of the game should load in. When loaded, type and enter this line:

POKE 25812,255: FOR A = 25816 TO 25843: POKE A ± 3, PEEK A: NEXT A: POKE 25816,50: POKE 25817,36: POKE 25818,114: RANDOMIZE USR 25500

FUTURE KNIGHT EDITOR

Now, here's something I bet you didn't know! Gremlin Graphic's *Future Knight* has a built-in editing facility allowing you to construct your own screens. Ivan Bristow **from Brinkwood discovered this little marvel of technology.**
The editing keys are:
Q,W,P,L – Cursor directional keys
U – Selects the building block
F – Shifts forward to the next screen
B – shifts back to the previous screen
S – places a block at the cursor's position
BREAK – returns you to the *Future Knight* game menu.

KRAKOUT

Paul Wells **is after my job, ha! No chance. But he was kind enough to supply this nifty routine for Gremlin's *Krakout*.**

Load the BASIC loader (the screen should turn black). Reset the Spectrum, type and run the listing and start the tape up again – if it works.

```
10 REM KRAKOUT
11 REM BY PAUL WELLS
12 CRASH JUNE 1987
20 CLEAR 65270
30 LET SUM=0
40 LET INF=61: REM CHANGE TO 0 FOR
   INFINITE LIVES
50 LET LEVEL=0: REM CHANGE TO
   DESIRED LEVEL - 1
60 LET LIVES=2: REM CHANGE TO
   DESIRED NUMBER - 1
70 FOR N=65280 TO 65323
80 READ A
90 POKE N,A
100 LET SUM=SUM+A
110 NEXT N
120 LET SUM=SUM-LEVEL-LIVES-INF
130 IF SUM <>360 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
    DATA":STOP
140 PRINT "DATA OKAY, START TAPE"
150 RANDOMIZE USR 65280
200 DATA 221, 33, 0, 64, 17, 156, 190, 62
210 DATA 60, 55, 205, 86, 5, 33, 229, 181
220 54, INF, 33, 242, 142, 54, 62, 35
230 DATA 54, LEVEL, 35, 54, 50, 35, 54, 156
240 DATA 35, 54, 142, 35, 54, 62, 35, 54
250 DATA LIVES, 195, 168, 139
```



FEUD

Hummmm. Odd. The Feud POKEs printed in issue 39 are a mystery to me; they worked fine on my Spectrum and on quite a few other people's, but not on Mark Duffey**'s Spectrum. He supplied this alternative listing just in case anyone else was having problems.**

```
1 REM FEUD
2 REM BY MARK DUFFEY
3 REM CRASH JUNE 1987
10 CLEAR 24716
20 REM CODE 42717, 40818
30 LOAD "" CODE
40 POKE 47190,201: POKE 44186,0: POKE
   49043,7: POKE 49210,201: RANDOMIZE
   USR 41653
```

MULTIFACE ONE SPECIAL!

With the growing ranks of Multiface One owners around, I thought it about time I gave you a chance to use the device for entering some very simple POKEs. For information on how to insert them consult the manual, but you shouldn't find it at all difficult!

ACADEMY

From Peter Murray **and** Steven Atkinson **of Hartlepool come these few POKEs which allow you to alter the variables within the game.**

```
POKE 26497 - cost (100 or less)
POKE 24496 - weight
POKE 26458 - progress report one
POKE 26459 - progress report two
POKE 26460 - progress report three
POKE 26441 - progress report four
POKE 47754 - missiles (max 255)
POKE 47755 - ammo (max 255)
POKE 47756 - flares (max 255)
POKE 47757 - bombs (max 255)
```

And all the rest are from Andre Brus**, all the way from Holland, and should be entered on title screens rather than when the game is in play.**

COBRA

Infinite lives:
POKE 36512,62
POKE 36513,5
POKE 36514,0

XEVIOUS

POKE 53592, n (where n is the number of lives desired)

FIRELORD

Infinite lives:
POKE 34509,0

SCOOBY DOO

Infinite lives:
POKE 29614,0

CAMELOT WARRIORS

Infinite lives:
POKE 53920,33
POKE 53921,6
POKE 53922,0

WRIGGLER

Infinite lives:
POKE 50173,0

CHUCKIE EGG II

Infinite lives:
POKE 35453,0

LEGEND OF KAGE

POKE 30609, n (where n is the number of lives desired)

TOP GUN

Infinite lives, one player game only:
POKE 26460,0
Chosen number of lives: two player game, where n is the number desired:
POKE 27727,n
POKE 27728,n

WEST BANK

POKE 51210, n

FANTASTIC VOYAGE

Infinite lives:
POKE 54492,0

IMPOSSABALL

Infinite lives:
POKE 41185,0

SABOTEUR II

Yes, I know it is reviewed in this issue (something wrong with the postal service perhaps?) but as the game's been available for a while, here's the solution to level one from Jonathon 'Ninja' Hodgson **from Billingham. Thanks also go to** Colin Campbell **from Glasgow and** Scott Sinclair **from Winchester, who all provided tips.**

Jump off the hang-glider as soon as you start and slowly walk right. Drop down onto the platform with the tight-rope and walk right to the end of it. And then . . .

Down, down, left, down steps, left, slowly off the edge, into room, up, right, up until the ladder is reached, up until you come to the weapons base, get punched tapes, right, right, right, down, right, use computer, left, left, left, left, down, left, down, right, down all the way, down steps, right, down, move lift up with terminal, left, onto lift, move lift down, right, down, down, left to ladders, all the way down, get weapons if necessary, left, left, up, up, right, move lift up with terminal, left, left onto lift, move lift down, right, down, down, get onto bike and escape!

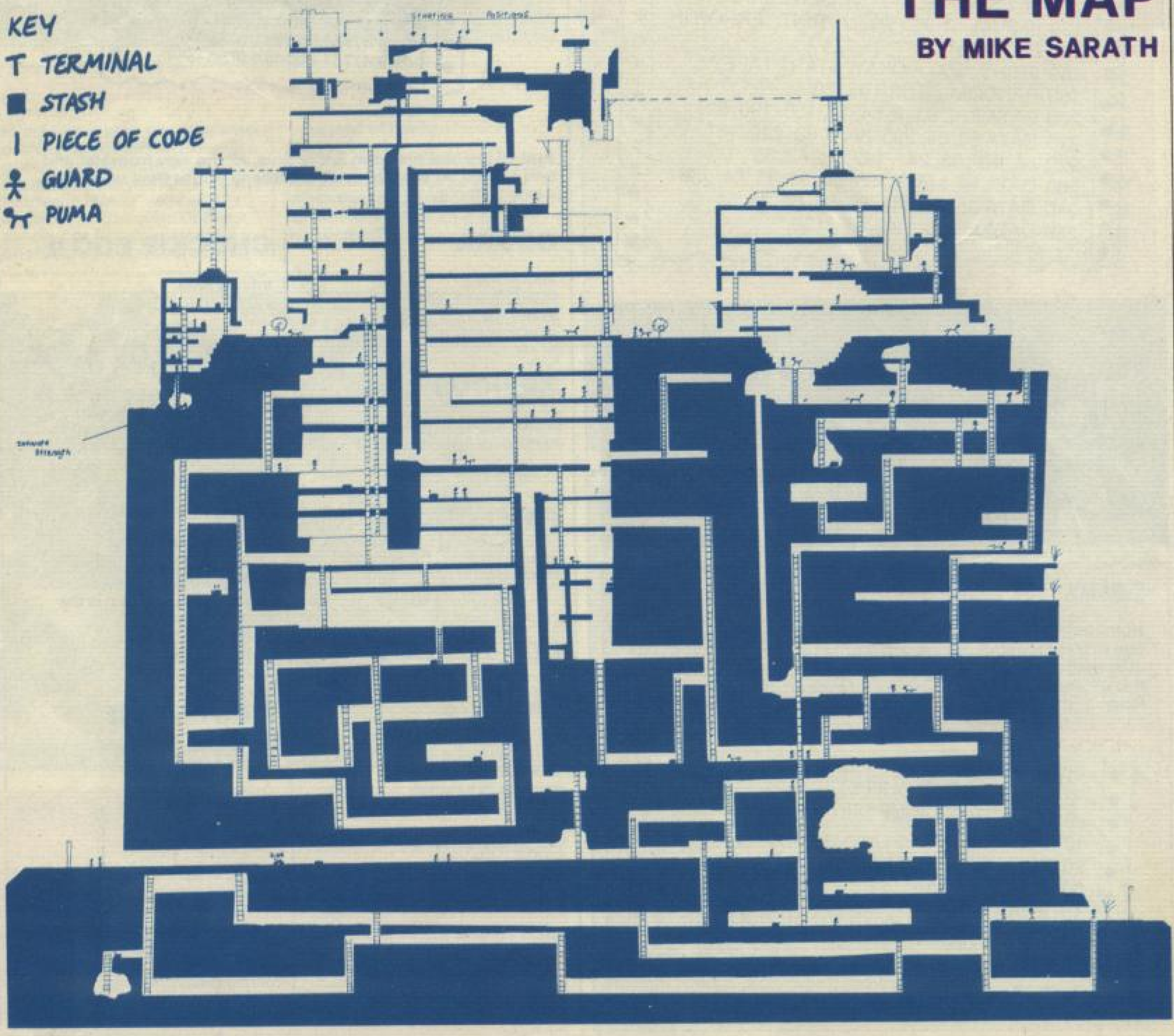
And here's some level codes from Darren Dodds **who hails from Whitburn in Sunderland.**
Mission 1 press ENTER
Mission 2 type JONIN
Mission 3 type KIME
Mission 4 type KUJI KIRI
Mission 5 type SAIMENJITSU
Mission 6 type GENIN
Mission 7 type MI LU KATA
Mission 8 type DIM MAK



SABOTEUR II

THE MAP

BY MIKE SARATH



NETHER EARTH

Here's the complete solution for the Argus game which we reviewed last issue. It comes from Andrew Lewis **who lives in Edinburgh. He completed the game on 8 April and claims to be the first person to do so. That is unless you know different . . . (As Esther Rantzen would say)**

- Make one Antigrav plus cannon, and one track plus cannon. Advance Antigrav 30 miles, and capture the phaser and the nuclear factory. Order trailed vehicle to capture neutral factories, then work the Antigrav back. You should now have one factory of every kind. Install your two machines in the front two factories, with orders to stop and defend.
- Return to your warbase and make as many trailed vehicles with missiles or phasers, and an electric module, because you can send them to the front positions and park defensively; again with orders to stop and defend.
- Make an Antigrav vehicle with phasers, missiles, cannons and an electric module. This is the strongest type of vehicle and can withstand five shots from a phaser before being destroyed. Always put an electric module on vehicles as it adds range and strengthens its armour. Place this vehicle in your phaser factory, and from this position you can destroy any enemy within range. Stay with this vehicle for about 100 days and repulse any enemy attacks. This may appear boring but it's really worth it.
- You should now have many resource points. Return to the warbase and make as many vehicles, as described above. Order them to destroy enemy robots.
- Keep the offensive up, and help vehicles to destroy troublesome enemies. Return once more to warbase and make as many track vehicles as possible, assigning them to capture enemy factories. Remember, enemies can be destroyed by using your radar – this where missiles are most handy.
- When one of your vehicles draws near to an enemy warbase, put it under combat control and capture that warbase.
- You may find that your vehicles get stuck in a small channel near the third warbase. Should this be the case, take an Antigrav unit with a nuclear device and blow the blocks out of the way – remember to pull your vehicles well out of blasting range.
- Repeat the sixth point to finish the game.

ENDURO RACER

Following the Smashing review of *Enduro Racer* loads of people wrote in with the same tip. So, take a deep breath as I thank the following:

Richard Jenkins, Featherstone; The Sheff Hackers, Sheffield; Garry Dark, Gosport; Jeff Talbot, Weybridge; Mark Freeman and Lewis Peacock, Twyford; Garnet Wragg, Huddersfield; David Offor, Staines; Nigel Jones, Kidderminster; Gary Henderson, Whitfield; Stefan Langford-Rose, Dalston; Paul Robertson, Gardenhall; David Johnson, Scunthorpe; Steven Wood, Filey; Paul Murray, Hartlepool; John Chan, Swindon; Stuart and Paul Backhouse, Steephill Cove; Paul Bryson, Glasgow; James Oglesby, Cottingham; John Cripps, Chorleywood; Justin Runkett; Andrew Woods, Thornhill; Clive and Martin Stonebridge; Dave Clements and Michael Brown, Bristol.

Anyway, this is what they discovered – once the game's started press forwards, Caps Shift and A at the same time and you're whisked through the first three levels. You're on your own through level four, but the tip to complete level five is to go behind the palm trees and keep the throttle full on and the game should be completed. Now why didn't I think of that?

CURSE OF SHERWOOD

Al **and** Rick **from Pirton in Hertfordshire would have been popular with the Midlands Saxons of old. They've come up with a hacking method for ridding Sherwood Forest of the opposition, and one which also makes you immune to their Norman weapons.**

Firstly, MERGE"" in the loader and delete line 10. Type CLEAR 23999 and load in the rest of the code with LOAD""CODE. Then, type these POKEs in directly:

POKE 58370,0
POKE 58395,0
POKE 58704,0

followed by:

BORDER 0: RANDOMIZE USR 35073

and finally enter:

POKE 58370,0
POKE 58704,0
POKE 58381,100
POKE 58703,100
POKE 58395,0
POKE 58379,100
POKE 58385,0
POKE 58705,0

And some clues . . .

- **The scroll with the map is not needed.**
- **The shield is not needed.**
- **The club smashes down the door through the teleport.**
- **The ice wand freezes the river making it possible to walk across.**

HIGHLANDER

'Why bother typing in the massive *Highlander* listing from Issue 39, when you can use my simple cheat,' **crows** Richard Hurst **from Sale in Cheshire. So c'mon tell us what it is Rich . . .**

Kneel down and keep performing a high block, so that when the opponent hits you it's his energy that decreases, not yours!

Good Stuff.

KAT TRAP KORRECTION

Bit of a cock up here I'm afraid. A line of the *Kat Trap* routine was missed from the listing in Issue 39. Anthony Beardsmore **pointed it out and supplied the correction. Just add the extra line . . .**

90 RANDOMIZE USR 57344

SPACE HARRIER

Here's a wee bit o' blarney from Clive Kelly **in Ireland to make all trainee Space Harriers invincible. Just select the keys as normal and when you return to the main menu type** CHEAT3FB69 **and, hey presto, the game starts on its own with you, like I said, invincible.**

NEMESIS

Simpler than last month's hack, just MERGE in the loader and enter 56 POKE 51479,1 **and you're indestructible, thanks to** David Stevens **from Swindon.**

The second in a series . . .

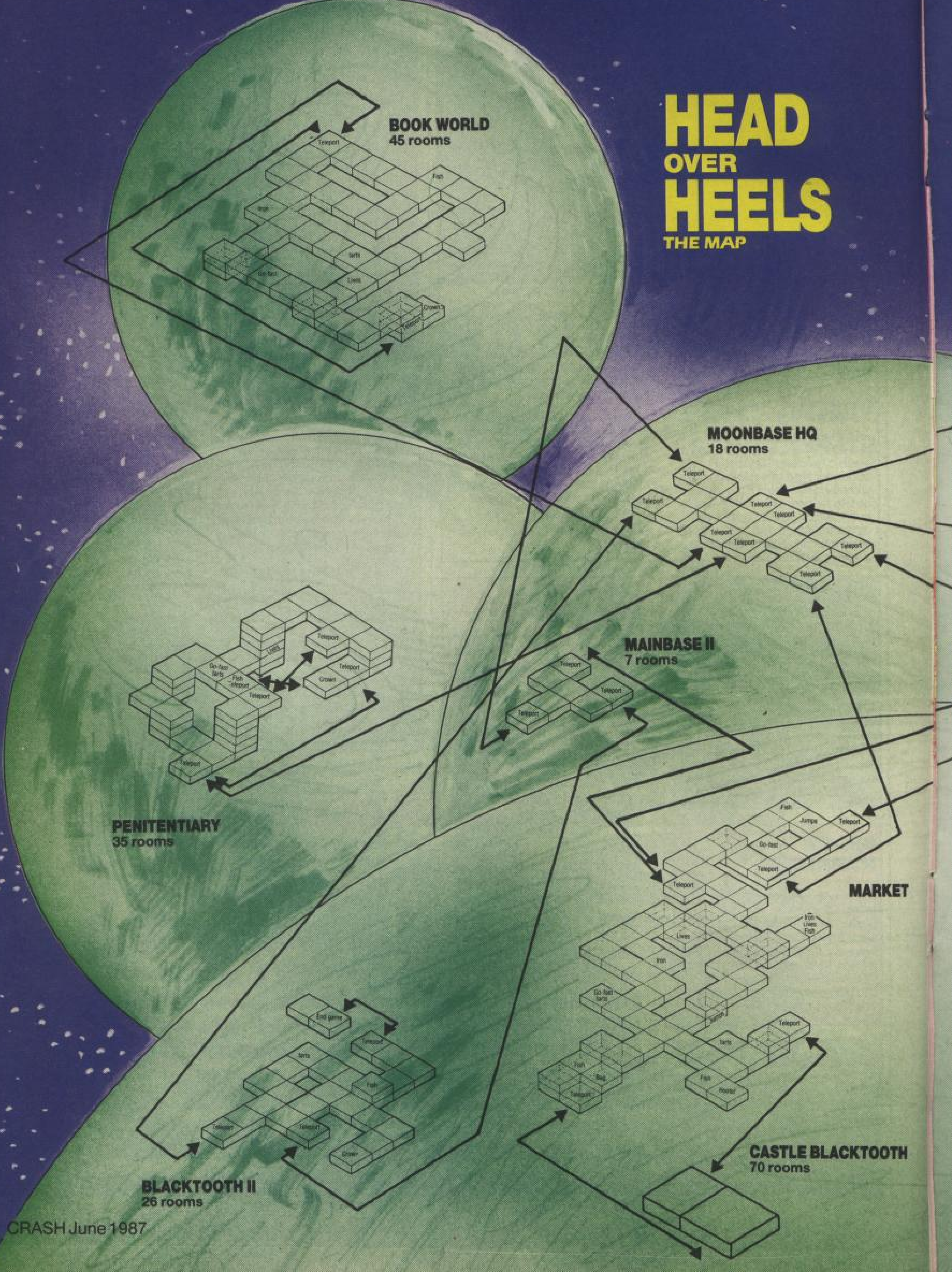
THE GOLDEN OLDIE COLLECTION

yet another table of classics . . .

TITLE	POKE	RESULT
ZAXXON	48825,255	INFINITE LIVES
ARCADIA	25776,0	INFINITE LIVES
MOON ALERT	42404,255	100 LIVES
SABOTEUR	46998,0	STOPS THE CLOCK
SABOTEUR	29894,0	INFINITE LIVES
FINDERS KEEPERS	34252,0	INFINITE LIVES
SAI COMBAT	65364,201: 32421,1	INFINITE LIVES
SWEEVO'S WORLD	33219,0	INFINITE LIVES
FRANK N STEIN	34124,0	
HUNCH BACK	26888,0	
PI-BALLED	44416,5	
BIRDS AND THE BEES	37852,255	
JACK AND THE BEANSTALK	56110,0	

Compiled by Tim Bratton, **Steyning, and** Michael Smith, **Morley.**

HEAD OVER HEELS
THE MAP





HEAD OVER HEELS

When I came in this morning, my fingers were pretty sore from pruning the roses, but by the time I'd finished typing in this next solution, they were pouring blood.

Anyway, Wayne Pester **from Newport Pagnell was the first one to come up with the solution, although many set in tips. Wayne, your £20 software voucher for top-tipster of the month is winging its way to you now.**

The directions indicate the route around the locations and not how to solve each particular puzzle, and make more sense when used in conjunction with programmer Jon Ritman's map.

Use teleport, left, down through floor, left, top exit, doughnuts, bottom exit, left, left, bottom exit, hooteright, top exit, right, top exit, top exit, top exit, top exit, top exit, doughnuts, bottom exit, right, right, top exit, right, top exit, top exit, right, right, down through floor, bottom exit, control Heels, use teleport, top exit, go through ceiling, right, bottom exit, bag, top exit, right, go through ceiling, bottom exit, right, right, right, right, go through ceiling, right, right, top exit, right, right, down through floor, top exit, top exit, top exit, down through floor, left, join up, right, right, right, top exit, top exit, top exit, right, right, down through floor, split up, control Head, bottom exit, bottom exit, use teleport, top exit, right, control Heels, right, right, right, bottom exit, bottom exit, right, use teleport, top exit, top exit, top exit, left, top exit, top exit, left, use teleport, top exit, left, join up, top exit, top exit, left, use teleport, split up, control heels, right, right, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, right, top exit, top exit, control heabottom exit, right, top exit, top exit, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, top exit, right, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, right, bottom exit, join up, doughnuts, right, right, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, right, right, bottom exit, get to other end of room and control only Head, bottom exit, bottom exit, down through floor, down through floor, left, left, control Heels, bottom exit, left, use teleport, jump along platform, top exit, use teleport, crown.

Join up, right, use teleport, left, use teleport, right, right, use teleport, right, right, right, split up, control Heels, top exit, top exit, top exit, right, top exit, top exit, top exit, top exit, right, right, right, right, control Head, right, right, right, right, right, top exit, top exit, left, left, top exit, doughnuts, bottom exit, right, right, top exit, right, top exit, top exit, top exit, left, join up, top exit, top exit, top exit, top exit, go through ceiling, bottom exit, down through floor, right, crown.

Left, top exit, use teleport, use teleport, left, top exit, right, use ▶

teleport, split up, control Heels, top exit, control Head, top exit, join up, top exit, top exit, right, top exit, right, right, split up, control Heels, right, right, go through ceiling, right, get to the other side, top exit, top exit, left, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, top exit, control Head, right, top exit, top exit, right, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, top exit, join up, top exit, right, right, bottom exit, bottom exit, right, right, bottom exit, down through floor, down through floor, bottom exit, down through floor, right, right, go through ceiling, go through ceiling, top exit, top exit, crown.

Bottom exit, use teleport, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, use teleport, left, left, use teleport, split up, control Heels, left, left, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, right, right, control Head, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, join up, right, bottom exit, bottom exit, left, left, left, left, left, top exit, doughnuts, split up, control Heels, bottom exit, left, left, left, control Head, top exit, top exit, top exit, left, left, left, go through ceiling, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, down through floor, join up, bottom exit, bottom exit, right, right, down through floor, down through floor, right, crown.

Left, go through ceiling, use teleport, use teleport, right, top exit, top exit, split up, control Heels, right, top exit, use teleport, right, right, bottom exit, right, use teleport, top exit, control Head, left, top exit, use teleport, right, right, bottom exit, join up, right, right, bottom exit, bottom exit, bottom exit, left, left, crown.

Right, right, top exit, top exit, top exit, right, bottom exit, right, right, top exit, get to other end of room, split up, control Heels, top exit, do not use teleport yet, control Head top exit, join up, teleport to complete the game.



STARGLIDER MISSIONS

When you wish upon a star, doesn't matter who you are, when you wish upon a star the missions come from afar. Eat your heart out Walt Disney. Following the epic quest for *Starglider* tips, here comes some help for missions two, three and four from Mick (Professor Dude) Garlick **from Lowestoft in Suffolk.**

LEVEL TWO MISSIONS:

Pick up Super Missile – This is an enhanced weapon with a much longer range than normal missiles. One can be carried in addition to the two other missiles. It doesn't appear to be any more powerful than the others.

Destroy Ergon Battle Crawler – This is a particularly nasty piece of machinery, which resembles a mobile green tri-launcher with a flapping lid. Once you set off on the mission there's a time limit within which you are to destroy the EBC before it destroys one of your bases. The easiest way to destroy one is by circling round behind, and flying up to it at ground level, before hitting it with a missile.

You're not guaranteed to get a missile when you dock for this mission, and there isn't time to fly to another base for one, so from level two onwards it's worth keeping a missile handy just in case.

LEVEL THREE MISSION:

Destroy Ergon Command Centre – The Ergons now start building bases of their own in the shape of a cube surrounded by four towers. These pump out homing missiles as you approach. Best method for their destruction is to fly out at a fair speed and at ground level with the lasers constantly firing. Release the missile just as you are about to hit the base – any sooner and it may be destroyed by one of the homing missiles.

LEVEL FOUR MISSION:

Destroy Ergon Ammunition Dump – This looks like a large 3D star set into the ground. It behaves in roughly the same way as the command centres and fires homing missiles as you come in. The proceedure for destroying this is the same as that for the Ergon command centres.

And now the revenge of . . .

THE HAXBY HACKERS

You just can't keep those boys down, and who would want to? I love them (to a point . . .). The El Supremeos of POKEing have come up with two amazing routines this month. There's little to add except sit back, type them in and enjoy infinite entertainment from the top tipsters.

Oh, and Derrick, Richard says that a bit of bombardment never hurt anyone!

AMAUROTE

Infinite lives

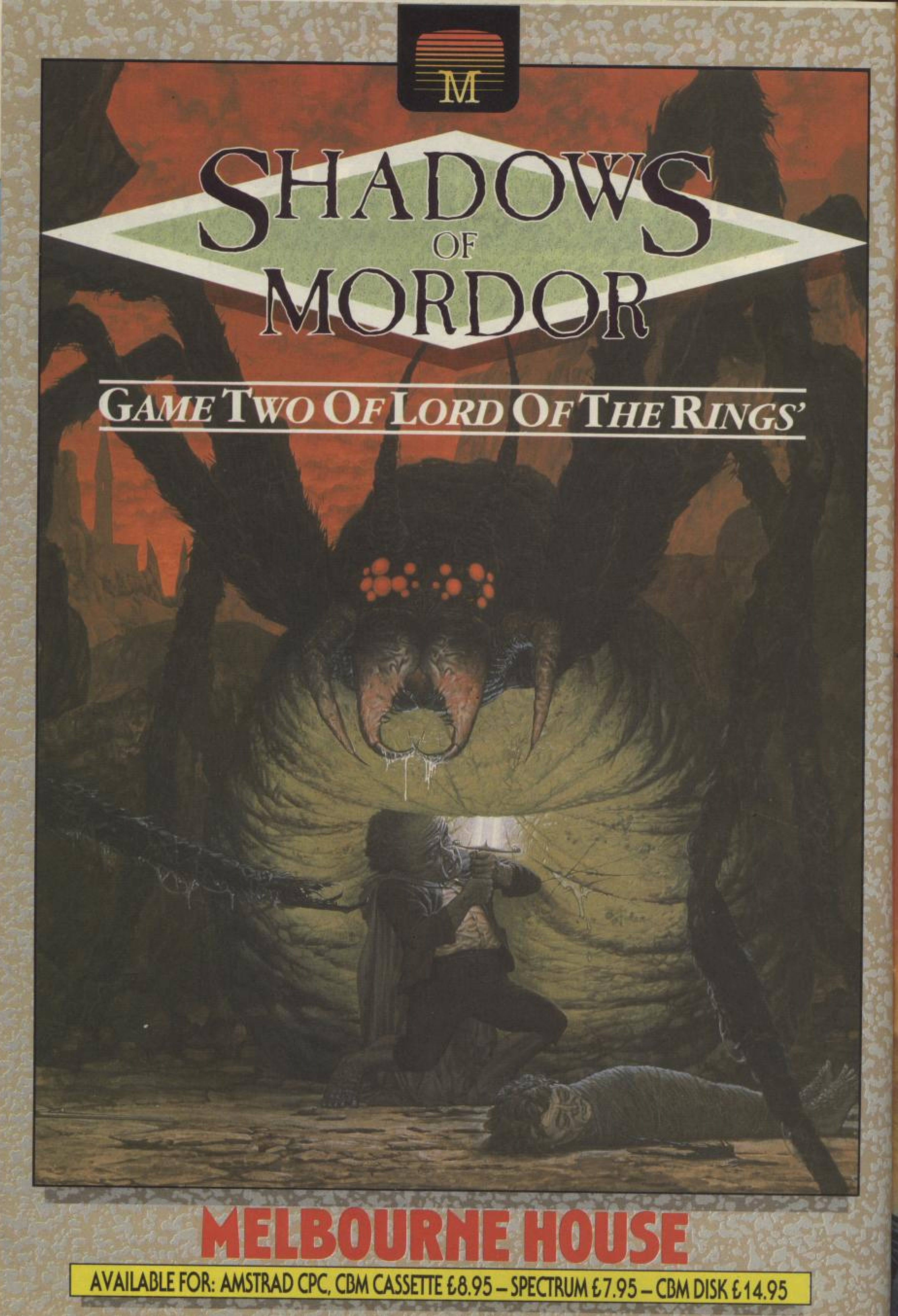
```
10 REM AMAUROTE
20 REM BY THE HAXBY HACKERS
30 CRASH JUNE 1987
40 CLEAR 26590
50 POKE 23739,82
60 POKE 23740,0
70 LOAD""CODE 16384
80 LOAD""CODE
90 POKE 46248,201
100 RANDOMIZE USR 26600
```

STAR RUNNER

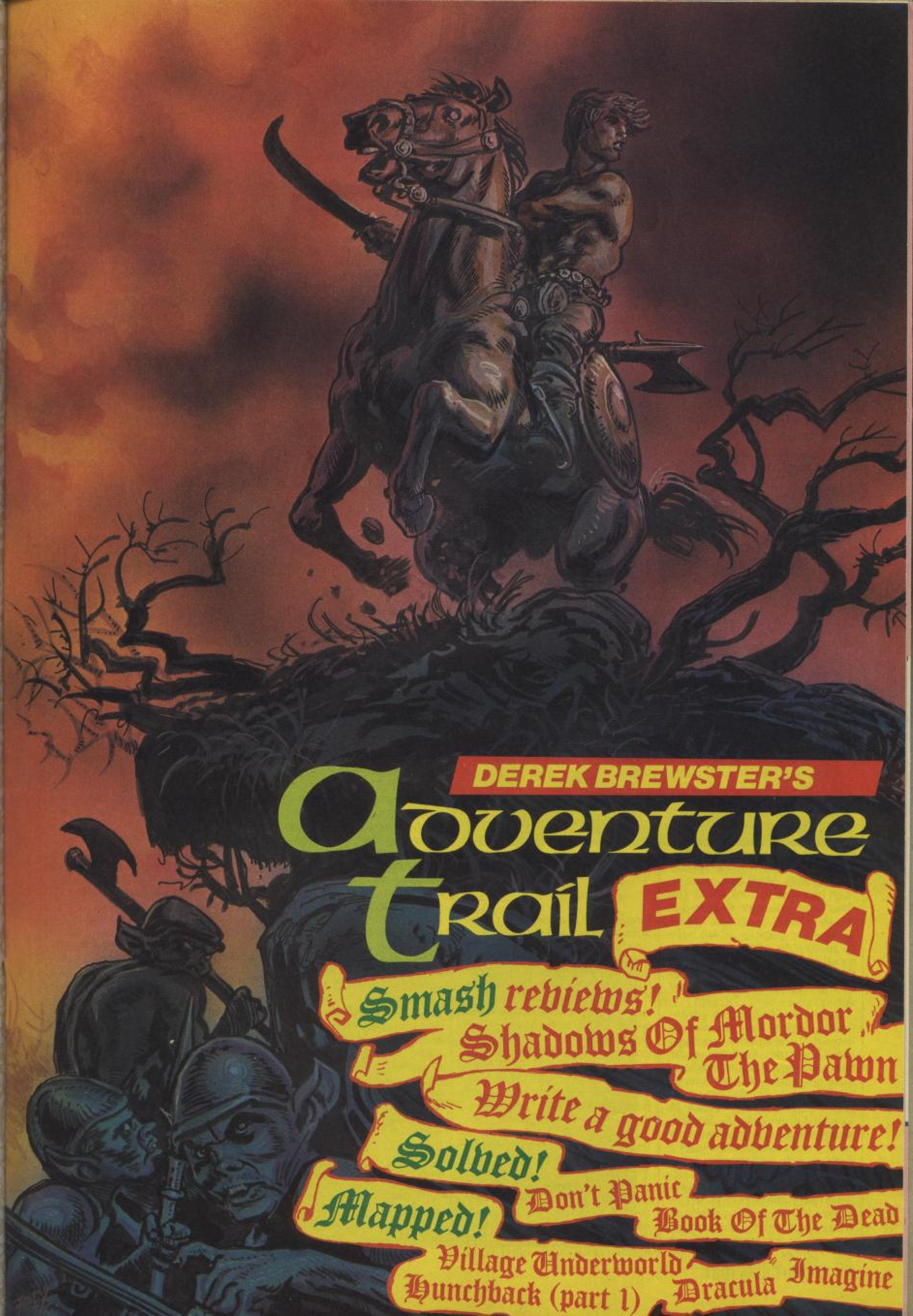
Infinite time

```
10 REM STAR RUNNER
20 REM HAXBY HACKERS
30 REM CRASH JUNE 1987
40 LOAD""CODE 16384
50 LET HAXPOC=2:LET TOT=0
60 PAPER 0: INK 0: BORDER 0: CLS
70 FOR F=23310 TO 23321
80 READ A: POKE F,A
90 LET TOT=TOT+HAXPOC * A
100 LET HAXPOC=HAXPOC+1
110 NEXT F
120 IF TOT <> 11306 THEN PRINT "ERROR
    IN DATA"
140 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
150 DATA 205, 86, 5, 62
160 DATA 0, 50, 140, 193
170 DATA 50, 152, 193, 193, 201
```

And that's it for another month. Thank you for all your help, and sorry for the many tipsters who didn't see their names in print. I was surprised by the amount of entries to our mapping competition in Issue 39. The winner is picked (he's an adventure cartographer), but many of the runners up look likely candidates for my further requests, so keep those tidy pens at work. The address for playing tips, POKEs, maps and cheats various is, PLAYING TIPS, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. I'll be back next month with more and more of the same.



M
SHADOWS OF MORDOR
GAME TWO OF LORD OF THE RINGS'
MELBOURNE HOUSE
AVAILABLE FOR: AMSTRAD CPC, CBM CASSETTE £8.95 – SPECTRUM £7.95 – CBM DISK £14.95


DEREK BREWSTER'S
Adventure Trail
EXTRA
Smash reviews!
Shadows Of Mordor
The Pawn
Write a good adventure!
Solved!
Don't Panic
Book Of The Dead
Mapped!
Village Underworld
Hunchback (part 1)
Dracula
Imagine

GREAT ADVENTURING MOMENTS - 1984

Back in 1984 CRASH took its first faltering steps along the start of The Adventure Trail. That year saw the release of many adventures whose lastability might surprise those who think all old games are long dead and gone (especially arcade players used to short shelf life games). Here I point the connoisseur of old (but good) games back to the Summer of '84 where we begin our look at the Famous Five.

FANTASIA DIAMOND

Hewson Consultants

Reviewed way back in June of '84, this illustrated adventure had a tremendous amount going for it. Independent characters, real time, cursor key option on movement, weakness as an added characteristic to bring realism to the concept of fatigue, user-friendly vocabulary going beyond verb/noun with LOOK AT distinguishable from LOOK INTO, and even LOOK ACROSS into adjacent locations to see signs of impending danger. All of these served to made this an adventure with a difference.

SNOWBALL

Level 9

A classic Level 9 text-only game with the long, carefully-crafted atmospheric location descriptions and detailed, informative examine reports which have since become their hallmark. The storyline still looks interesting, and the Snowball spacecraft is still a wonder to explore.

THE KET TRILOGY

Incentive

The Mountains of Ket started it all, followed by Temples of Vran with atmospheric location passages, a combat routine, along with well-rounded, interesting problems. The Final Mission, reviewed in November, added neatly boxed-in location descriptions, on-screen score, a tune on entering locations for the first time, and a strong examine command. Incentive's text-only threesome still looks good.

THE HOBBIT

Melbourne House

This is a most timely recommendation as The Hobbit book celebrates its fiftieth birthday this year, having been published way back in 1937. The eponymous computer game joined the super league the moment it was released due to its independent characters and comely text and pictures. Its problems are fascinating, which may go some way to explaining the fact that it does not seem to have aged here in 1987.

LORDS OF MIDNIGHT

Beyond

You're definitely missing out if you haven't seen this one. Adventure Trail was one of the first to publish a review, but the success it went on to achieve was all its own work, as it was the first game to show what the humble Spectrum could really do given an original idea. Many considered Mike Singleton, the game's author, a genius.

THE PAWN

Producer: **Rainbird**
Price: **£14.95**
Authors: **Magnetic Scrolls**

A CRASH Smash

The Pawn will already be known to many, as it has been doing well on the larger computers (including the QL and the Atari ST). However, it looked like there was little chance of it filtering its way down to the smaller home micros. Well, before we've even had time to think about *The Pawn* and anticipate it, here it is on the 128K Spectrum, albeit without the graphics which have so prettily decorated its reviews for other computers. Text-only on the 128, *The Pawn* still provides all the entertainment of its sister versions.

Unless you've been an adventuring ostrich, you'll already know that *The Pawn* has received many accolades. Opening up the typically glossy Rainbird package quite a jumble of parts comes tumbling out. The largest, most glossy booklet is the novella, A Tale of Kerovnia by G Sinclair, which shows a map of Kerovnia on its back cover and includes a cypheric help section towards the end. This set of numbers and letters, when typed into the computer after the input HINT, is digested by the program itself and are regurgitated as plain English phrases. As the number of letter and number combinations are long in order to answer such questions as How Do I Cross the Red Line? and How Do I Drop the Wristband?, the instructions give you two examples to try your hand which I can reveal bring up these two comments: 'Congratulations' and 'one two, one two, testing'. Also in the package are two smaller booklets, one a general guide to gameplay and the other a more specific set of notes directed at the 128K Spectrum. To complete the pack is a good poster displaying the picture featured on the novella cover.

The screen layout, being full of text, is necessarily restricted in the ways in can offer diversions from a large sheet of words, but the program has made some attempts to provide interest. The top contains a band which bears the name of the current location, along with your score and the number of locations visited (you'll know which is which, as one of these figures increases rather more easily than the other!). What's below is light-coloured, superbly redesigned and readable text against a dark background. Cleverly, the program allows the intensity of the text colour to be raised or lowered by just pressing the GRAPH key, so you can keep the text readable as light conditions falling upon the screen vary (perhaps midday to midnight with a game as involved as this!). The GRAPH key is listed, along with some others which greatly assist editing your input during play. Apart from the usual delete one character to the left key (DELETE) you can also employ the left and right arrows to move through the text, the up and down arrows to jump one word left or right through the text, or delete one word to either left or right with TRUE VIDEO and INV VIDEO. Were this not enough, EDIT pulls down your last entry after the program has acknowledged it and found it wanting. These features, along with the 42 character lines (giving an almost word processor neatness to the display) and the up to two-and-a-half line input lengths, give the game a feel far removed from the old Spectrum fonts and faces.

The storyline and gameplay are truly enthralling, although you might take its boast of accepting everything you input lightly, as on many occasions the parser seems to ignore the second logical part of a long construction.

The story concerns a King Erik whose popularity has slid in the polls due to his condoning the banishment of the Roobikyoub dwarfs. The puzzle of the Roobikyoub lies in their supposed assassination of Queen Jendah II and their vital economic importance as they produced the smoothest, strongest malt whisky. Now the economy is literally depressed, with the gap in the drinks market filled by the Farthington Real Ale Company and the spring water-bottling Romni gnomes, interest groups who have no desire to see Roobikyoub in any new alignment (groan!). But people still hanker for the old whisky.

Play is fully explained in the booklet in a fashion which indeed, as the programmers hoped, goes a long way to enticing new adventurers to the game while still retaining the respect of old hands. The number of variations to achieve even a simple task are great as in LEAVE SHOP, where you can enter just that or:- GO SOUTH, S, GO S, OUT, O, EXIT, EXIT SHOP, or EXIT SOUTH. Similarly, the rather more complicated area of picking up items in a crowded location allows the likes of GET ALL FROM THE SCHOOL BAG EXCEPT THE ERASER or GET ALL EXCEPT THE CASES BUT NOT THE VIOLIN CASE which if you follow the logic, actually means you will get the violin case along with all the objects except the other cases! More impressive still, the instructions weigh in with KILL THE MAN EATING SHREW WITH

THE CONTENTS OF THE VIOLIN CASE (a sentence which is even ambiguous in plain English!) and REMOVE THE SHREW'S TAIL, an example of possessive construction I can't remember seeing before in an adventure (SYMB SHIFT and 7 brings up the raised apostrophe). AND, THEN, punctuation and IT are catered for as well but rounding off the vocabulary with another impressive feature is the intelligent way the program deals with input as when it asks a question to clarify the player's aims. For example, when dropping a hat the program might wonder which one should you be carrying two. Many programs inquire 'Which hat?' or 'Which one?', but this program not only is more specific with the query (say, 'Which hat, the small hat or the spotted hat?') but also allows the player to just quickly type in which hat without the need to repeat the initial input. Friendly indeed, mighty friendly.

Getting quite a way into the adventure there are some areas which suggest some largess on the part of the instructions. I have already mentioned the occasional relapse by the program when it chooses to ignore the second part of a complex sentence. The examine command (where, like most words, EXAMINE must be spelled out fully, along with long words such as floorboards) can be helpful, as in EXAMINE GRAVEL, 'The gravel is small pieces of black stone', can miss entirely as with 'What black stones?', or give a reply which may or may not be comical, 'The arms are quite long for the time of year.' It's worth noting here that EXAMINE and LOOK IN are subtly different commands, bringing about fundamental changes in your fortunes should you learn how to use them properly. On another occasion you are told how you cannot see a tree when you are in a forest while, despite the instructions boasting many weird and wonderful adjective recognitions, the program does not comprehend LOOSE in the command EXAMINE LOOSE FLOORBOARD. Let's stay with this one to lead me into one or two misgivings I have with the plot. EXAMINE FLOORBOARD replies 'large and very solid' yet levering the board with the hoe achieves nothing but doing something a lot simpler gets the result. However, more worrying in terms of a credible plot is the pouch which doesn't seem to exist until you have fetched the guru his water, an act totally unconcerned with the appearance of the pouch. Such inconsistencies pull the plot into an ever tightening feel of linearity.

The Pawn is a major addition to the Spectrum game player's library of fine games. As an adventure it is a most traditional fantasy affair with fewer unusual additions than you might expect, making little effort to probe new problems or find original solutions. No-one could be blamed for looking enviously at the superlative pictures seen on the Atari ST version (as on the box) but this text-only Spectrum game is still a fascinating trip into the imagination where all avid adventurers, fresh-faced or wizened, long to dwell.

Difficulty: not difficult
Graphics: none
Presentation: neat character set, adjustable text intensity
Input facility: complex sentences
Response: fast
General rating: really engaging, complex adventuring

Atmosphere	**95%**
Vocabulary	**90%**
Logic	**87%**
Addictive quality	**92%**
Overall	**90%**

SHADOWS OF MORDOR



Producer: **Melbourne House**
Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Beam Software**

The biggest software releases in adventure gaming are those based on the works of JRR Tolkien, for their source material is derived from the greatest set of fantasy books ever written.

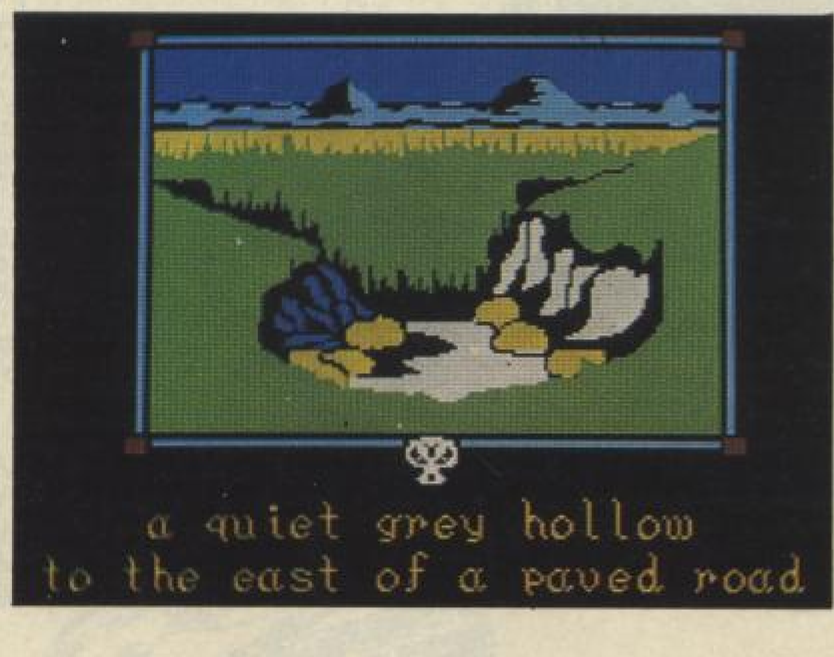
The Hobbit told the story of Bilbo Baggins and how he was unwittingly thrown into the world of darkness and danger far from the cosy tunnel he had known in Hobbiton. Bilbo eventually began to enjoy his exotic sojourns, along with the treasures and skills he had amassed, and this enthusiasm for adventure, peculiar among home-loving Hobbits, transferred itself to his young and impressionable cousin, Frodo. The *Lord of the Rings* trilogy of books tells Frodo's story, and this game being the second computer instalment, it follows the theme of the second book, *The Two Towers*.

The computer game is titled *Shadows of Mordor* which probably reflects the adventure's desire not to be thought a rerun of the book, but a game more loosely based on that work and only keeping to the essential atmosphere of Middle Earth. They take another chance to distance themselves from the awe-inspiring and critical task of transposing Tolkien's masterpiece to the microcomputer in the style of the instructions, which have taken on a whimsical and self-deprecatory air. Have a look at this line from the introduction: 'The *Shadows of Mordor* is a brilliant piece of fantasy software thanks to the reworking of many of the game's systems by a highly trained team of idiots'.

If the intention is to show the reader that this adventure is, after all, only a game, they can rest assured this style certainly lowers expectations.

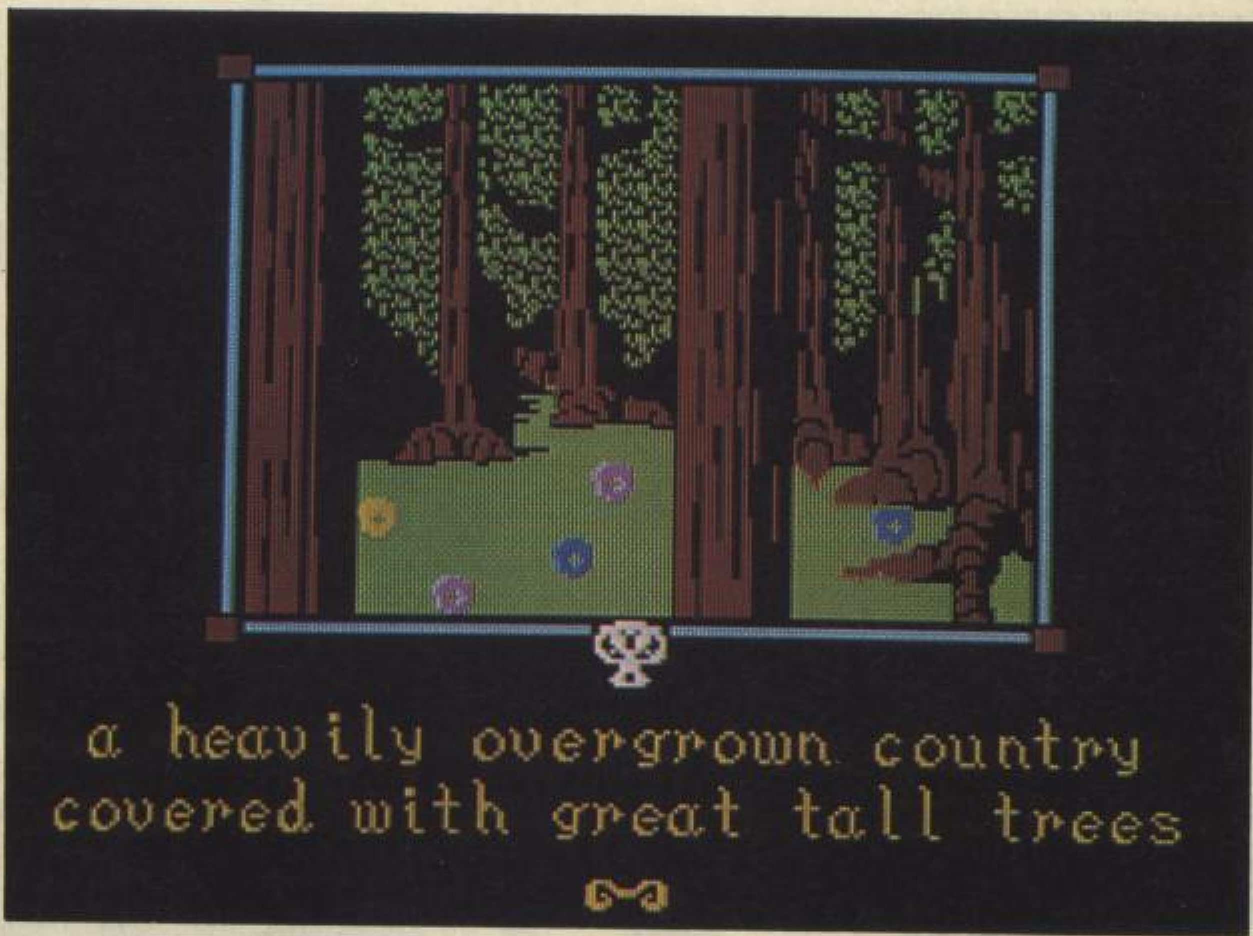


Although there are instances of idiocy to be found, let's not dwell here and instead consider the many fine aspects to this great game.



Gameplay is similar to *Lord of the Rings Part One*, perhaps too similar for those who weren't altogether struck by that program's performance. The programming team saw in that first game advantages in offering complex character interaction and vocabulary handling. Here the characters again are marvellously independent with their own personalities, strengths and allegiances. These characteristics may well influence the kind of response you achieve when conversing with your colleagues and acquaintances using the important SAY TO (GANDALF) construction. The two examples given go some way to indicating the possibilities of interacting with the chief players in the plot: SAY TO SAM 'KILL THE ORC WITH THE SWORD' and SAY TO SMEAGOL 'TAKE THE GOLD FROM THE ORC' (Smeagol is a

creature, who like Thorin in *The Hobbit*, seems to be the total imbecile, forever sneaking off and returning from the bushes). With Sam, you can choose to have him controlled automatically by the computer, in which case he can be asked to perform specific actions by way of the SAY TO SAM construction. Alternatively you can take a more active role by BECOMEing SAM. (note the full stop), which may be of more use when the Hobbits go their separate ways. As with *LOR Part One*, you must take up this option at the very start of the game, but unlike that first adventure, there appears to be only the two Hobbits available for this scheme, as opposed to the four (Merry and Pippin were the others) in the first game. This necessarily changes the look of the adventure with the layers of pages effect gone, leaving just a band across the top bearing either the name of Sam or Frodo (the default character).



Vocabulary handling has always been a strong point to the big Melbourne House games. Here there's an 800-word vocabulary of Inglish, the English subset first seen in *The Hobbit*. Adjectives and prepositions are dealt with as efficiently as the verbs and nouns which form the basis of all mainstream adventure communication. Punctuation and the word AND can allow many instructions to be strung together, and this game boasts the opportunity for the player to give a character a string of commands to act upon immediately. ALL allows an action to affect everyone, including your own character, so KILL ALL should be tempered with BUT FRODO unless things are going particularly badly!

Due to the complexity of the vocabulary your input may have to become quite specific in order to achieve the desired result. In a game which seems to have something for rolling stones you must specify which direction you wish to roll it, otherwise the program assumes north. In another case the program selects a small sword for a task for which it is most unsuited given no alternative specific instructions by the player on which item to employ.

Beam Software have again penned this game, and it has got to be said that the face this adventure presents to the player isn't that tidy. When you consider the lengths even small software concerns are going to in order to improve colouring and readability of the screen, Beam might be said to be a little Luddite in their attitudes. Thankfully, the classic rounded, compact print famous from *The Hobbit* is retained (probably the prettiest character set ever to grace the Spectrum screen) and your input is tidily tucked away at the bottom in distinctive capitals, but above is a stark whiteness punctuated by an untidily-scrolling list of happenings. Technically, the game is very slow, with pregnant pauses imposed after just about every decision. And on the bug front, the extremely colourful graphics on the 128K (at least on the copy I was sent) are too fast even to form subliminal images. They're on and off in a literal flash.



The two major concerns (or shocks) from *Part One* are still here. The strange non-loading appearance to the loading sequence is retained, as is the need to repeatedly save, because a QUIT or a death requires the whole program to be loaded in again, not something one relishes, with a 128K program. It might be worth mentioning here that the 48K version does not have sufficient memory to support graphics.

Shadows of Mordor looks a very interesting game. The test of any game is how easily it entertains and I've got to say I really enjoyed reviewing this Melbourne House classic.

Difficulty: no pushover
Graphics: attractive
Presentation: average
Input facility: complex sentences
Response: slow
General rating: a big game

Atmosphere	94%
Vocabulary	90%
Logic	91%
Addictive quality	95%
Overall	93%

SHIPWRECK/CASTLE EERIE

Producer: **Tartan**
Price: **£2.95**
Author: **Tartan**

There's something about the names of these two programs, sold by mail order on one cassette, which suggests a certain familiarity even before you load up. To borrow a Monty Pythonism, they're good 'woody' words in the sphere of adventure game names. As it turns out, it isn't just the names that have a familiar ring to them – the programs have a look similar to *Subsunk*, or *Seabase Delta*, or both!

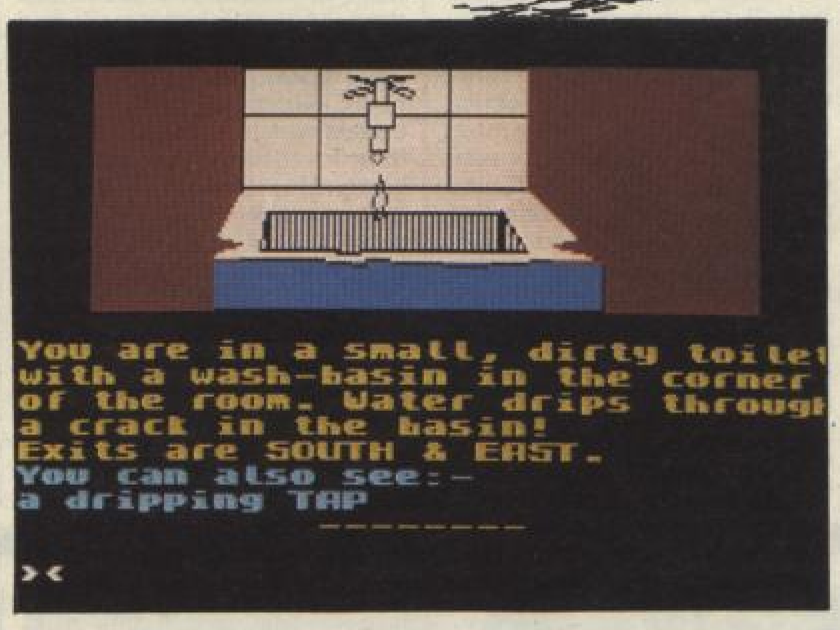
Given the success of those programs, and the ever-popularity of the themes of shipwreck and eerie castles, I could quite go along with those who think these programs are rather good. The graphics, as ever, are simple, but they aren't so crude as to be irritating (in fact they are very similar in style to *Seabase Delta*). The character set is distinctive and chunky and rates very highly on the readability scale. The beep which accompanies ENTER is also particularly reminiscent of *Seabase Delta*.

The story sets you up on the ship (you're taking a well-earned holiday) and dumps you off on an island (there is a fire down below and you are forced to abandon ship). Wandering around the ship is much as you'd expect, with the port on your left and the sherry on your right, and all things shipshape and nautical. There's a certain symmetry to this shipshapedness, with parallel decks running the length of the vessel separated by distractions such as a shop, writing room, cardroom, bar and bathing pool. A lifeboat and lifebelts are an early insight into your predicament, but for now you concern yourself with getting past the steward who bars the way to the lounge, gaining access to the bridge (for which you need a permit), and how to buy things in the shop and elsewhere when your character doesn't seem to have any spending money.

One aspect of this game which worries me a little is its insistence on rather specific solutions to certain problems. Most especially in the tight spots, I think the program could have allowed a greater number of word options without which many of the problems are going to have people really stumped. Anyway, on to the flip side to see if it is as much fun.

As with *Shipwreck*, *Castle Eerie* puts up the instructions on screen first, with a timely siren to warn you to stop the tape. In this game you play **Charlie Jones**, an extra-special agent working for a secret government department dealing with unsolved mysteries. You are certified, to carry a gun that is, and your assignment has you travelling to investigate a mysterious castle on the north Scottish coast. The castle should have been empty ever since the owner died in an odd manner some years ago, but dimly-lit figures have been seen at the windows at night, and strange sounds have been heard coming from the castle. Any who have been foolish enough to investigate in the past have never returned, so it is with some tepidation that you try to round up those responsible for this mystery.





▶ The taps always drip in Castle Eerie . . .

Following a rather good loading screen, you begin with a torch, a gun, but only one bullet as you have absent-mindedly left your ammunition behind. The opening picture has some atmosphere about it, showing the gateway to the castle with the shading used to enforce the image of light thrown from one side. Trying to enter the castle reveals the obvious ('The door's closed!'), so the only direction left open to you is west to a rather broken-down hut. This then leads onto quite a number of locations which have one or two items apiece, once again very similar to *Shipwreck*. Some items are immediately accessible, while others can't even be examined.

Once settled into the run of things you discover some nice touches. Picking up the ladder, you quite rightly find out you can't just cart it everywhere, whilst on a more frivolous theme, flashing lights and creaking door sounds keep the senses amused. As with *Shipwreck*, there are times when the vocabulary needs to be very specific, but given that the solutions, once found, are logical, this isn't such a damning criticism.

Shipwreck and *Castle Eerie* are rather entertaining adventures. They look smart and have engaging themes. I particularly liked *Castle Eerie*, whose problems are especially fun to solve. Programs for both amateur and wizened adventurers alike. Tartan Software can be contacted at 61 Bailif Norrif Crescent, Montrose, Angus DD10 9DT.

Difficulty: no brick walls, but the vocabulary can be exacting
Graphics: vary, but some aren't too bad at all
Presentation: very attractive, clean cut look
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: Quill (very fast), graphics slower
General rating: good

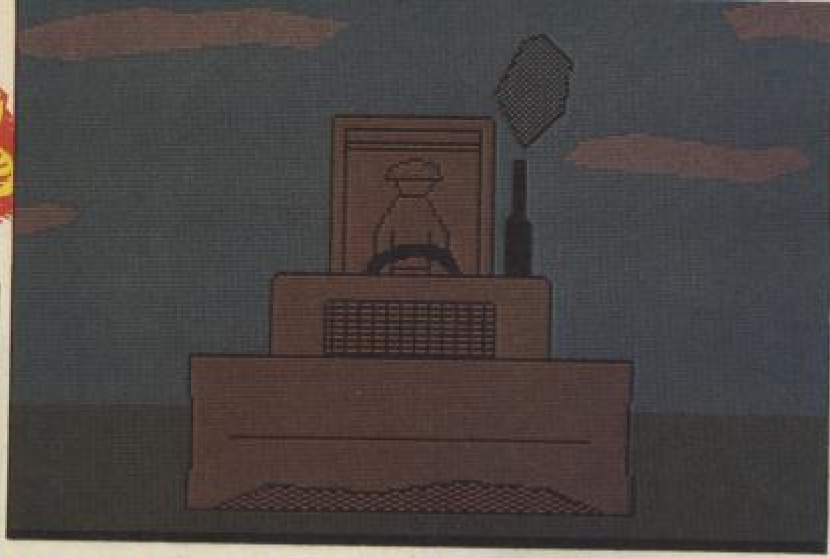
Atmosphere	**79%**
Vocabulary	**71%**
Logic	**88%**
Addictive quality	**87%**
Overall	**82%**

DON'T PANIC – PANIC NOW

Producer: **Dented Designs**
Price: **£3.99**
Authors: **A Sanders, H Church, M Eacrett**

Somewhere in the backwaters of space lies a blue-green planet whose inhabitants are so utterly primitive that they still think the C5 is a pretty neat idea . . . So starts a game whose humorous inspiration becomes quite clear when names such as Arfur Bent and Ford Escort roam around a Vulgar belching star cruiser with the aid of a Burble fish hearing device. Consider further the programming teams' name, a reworking of Denton Designs, and you have what looks like, and indeed is, a satire in the mould of **Fergus McNeil** (cited here as one Fungus McNaill). The point is that Fergus McNeil's satires deal with Tolkien and other 'straight' fantasy works, whereas Dented attempt to satirise an already deeply whimsical set of books (**Douglas Adams**' *Hitchiker's Guides*). You can't help wondering how much of this software's charm lies in its simply purloining the best parts of the *Hitchiker's* Series, and how much on the new extra dash of humour spread on top.

Arfur Bent's day starts much as you'd expect – nursing a hangover in bed, surrounded by countless empty bottles. The picture showing him snoozing in his bedroom is slowly drawn, but as with many in the three parts which make up this adventure, has a certain cartoon-like charm which in some way matches its overriding simplicity. You can collect up all the bottles and examine them (the bottles had previously held double-strength Scotch Whiskey), this ability to examine things being rather rare in the adventure as a whole. The bathroom is found to be in a bit of a mess, but the ever-useful toilet roll is here. A randomly-inspired message pops up now and again which states, 'Contrary to popular belief, the Truck Driver's Guide to the Universe says that the toilet roll is the most precious and important item any person or being could possibly possess' and so it seems the right thing to pick the roll up forthwith. Other humorous asides refer to a certain Marillion fan (yes, that Fungus again), the planet with 'Nice Big Macs' (The



▶ Freeway through Space, and clearance schemes below . . .

Earth, stupid), and the fact that the Truck Driver's Guide makes no mention of the VIC 20 whatsoever.

Don't Panic is no mean attempt at bringing the travails of Ford Prefect and Co to the microcomputer screen. It is a *Quilled and Illustrated* affair with slowly shaded drawings, the odd typing error, and the odd query against its structure (as at the bridge where you are told of a north-south path but not the east exit which sees progress). What the game does possess is oodles of character, good use of colour to enliven the text, and lines that are so ridiculous they tickle the chuckletums ('If you want to succeed, then supercede your old seeds with our new Superseeds. Sow some soon' – seen in the garden centre). Certainly worth the few Acturan Mega-Credits for this long three-parter, *Don't Panic* is available mail order from Dented Designs, 11 The Hill, Portstewart, Co. Londonderry BT55 7AT.

Difficulty: tricky in places, tacky in others
Graphics: simple with a certain cartoon flavour
Presentation: good; readable sci-fi character set
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: Quill
General rating: longer than a toilet roll and just as soft

Atmosphere	**69%**
Vocabulary	**71%**
Logic	**78%**
Addictive quality	**73%**
Overall	**71%**

OPERATION STALLION

Producer: **Wrightchoice Software**
Price: **£6.95**
Author: **A J Wright**

This *Quilled, Patched and Illustrated* program was sent to me some time ago. It's the first part of a trilogy of adventures which give the successful adventurer a chance to collect £500 from the software house should he or she complete all three releases. This game consists of two quite distinct parts (and is so old that parts three and four should be ready about now). Part One sees you finding your way to the briefing room to meet your boss CJ. On your way you collect some items by searching around your office and, if you can avoid the two (rather obvious) sudden deaths, arrive at the briefing room to collect the equipment for your mission. But this is jumping the gun. Let's see who you are and learn about your mission.

For the last six months Britain has been swamped with drugs. Large quantities of high quality heroin have made their way into the country, and it was all the Drugs Squad Officers could do to prevent the system collapsing. One lead emerged during intensive questioning of captured dealers – a Mr Big who went by the name of Stallion. A stroke of luck then led the team to a crashed lorry which was found to have the same type of heroin as their earlier hauls hidden within its tyres. A company named Grand Union Supplies were transporting a cargo of machinery parts to Istanbul with the lorry, and would seem to have returned from that city with the heroin aboard. Enquiries into the background of this company revealed it was run by one Chow King Kwok, whose record showed a history of drugs-related offences. The team's head, Detective Superintendent Chambers, felt that they were on to something and that Kwok might be the Stallion.

Catching Kwok at his sinister game proved far from easy however, as the criminal always seemed to keep one step ahead of the team. Then an agent following Kwok discovered the existence of a mole supplying him with their every move, but the agent was killed before he could reveal the mole's identity. It was now that Kwok's case became a matter of great urgency and the Prime Minister was informed.

During times of peace you are John Blake a reliable administrator in the records department. Only two people know otherwise: Charles Jenson (CJ) your boss, and the Prime Minister. Your alter ego is The Fixer, a member of a small crack division, working in areas outside the jurisdiction of the law. The work you

THE GOLDEN MASK

Producer: **Compass**
Price: **£2.50**
Author: **Jon Lemmon**

Oh yes, good old Compass software. We last bumped into Compass in December '86 with a game called *Demon from the Darkside*. Well, don't be fooled by the title, even officially, this is that game – Part Two. Like its predecessor, this makes full use of every utility under the sun, including the precursor to *PAW*, the Press text compressor addition to the *Quill* suite of aids. Any regular reader will know that I'm a sucker for innovation, no matter how small, and here we have a simple deviation from the norm, where exit directions from a location are marked by little arrows. Simple enough, and not altogether easily followed, but I'm a sucker for novelty and you do get used to the things after a short while.

Looking back to Part One in December, there was Morrack (your character), the apprentice to the wizard Ashmeard, he being the brave chap who banished Drakon to the cave of Illindel whilst at the same time relieving him of the Golden Mask. It was your task to add insult to injury and lighten the bad guy's load even further by snatching the Falcon Staff from him. Well, did you do it? If so, this is how the story now stands . . .

Having defeated Drakon and travelled back up the secret path of hell, Morrack once more stood in the lands of Dral. As he looked up at the bright sky, Wise the owl flew down to him. They talked for hours and it soon became apparent that Drakon had not died – nor for that matter had Stodge the dwarf. Now there was a new danger. Ashmeard the wizard was dead and with him died the knowledge of where the Golden Mask had been hidden. If Drakon found the mask before Morrack, he could once again summon great armies of demons and with Ashmeard dead, no-one could stop the evil which would devour Dral and all of its inhabitants. Your quest this time is to find the Golden Mask while avoiding Drakon's demon forces.

Visually, this game is good-looking with a demon's mask prettying the text border (or should that be uglying?), detailed pictures – even if they do display a somewhat eccentric choice of graphic styles – and a character set which is 'olde worlde' yet still attractive and clearly readable. A good choice of colours keeps things bright, and more decoration accompanies the items in the inventory list, this time small token graphics.

Getting involved in the game reveals a very playable adventure where your character gets carried along in the smoothly flowing action. You might say the game is not too difficult in the sense that everything meshes together easily in a short space of time, but further into the plot you might find the limiting nature of the vocabulary slowing you up (as at the boat). The vocabulary on the whole isn't bad though, with both L and R bringing about a Redescribe. Examining things is best done once you've picked an object up, otherwise you meet an unprepossessing reply. Exceptions are large objects like the boat which can be examined when first met. Apart from the crucifix (where EXAM CROSS delivers the goods with no allowance for EXAM CRUCIFIX) examine always seems to get a response, even if it's just the 'who are you looking at?' from Wise the owl in the first few frames. He also says 'Morrack, time is short. Stodge told me to meet you here and to tell you that Drakon has sent five demons to seal off the mountains of the moon. Travel east and you may be able to cut them off'. Not everything is completely clear in all of this, but at least the owl tells you which way to go.

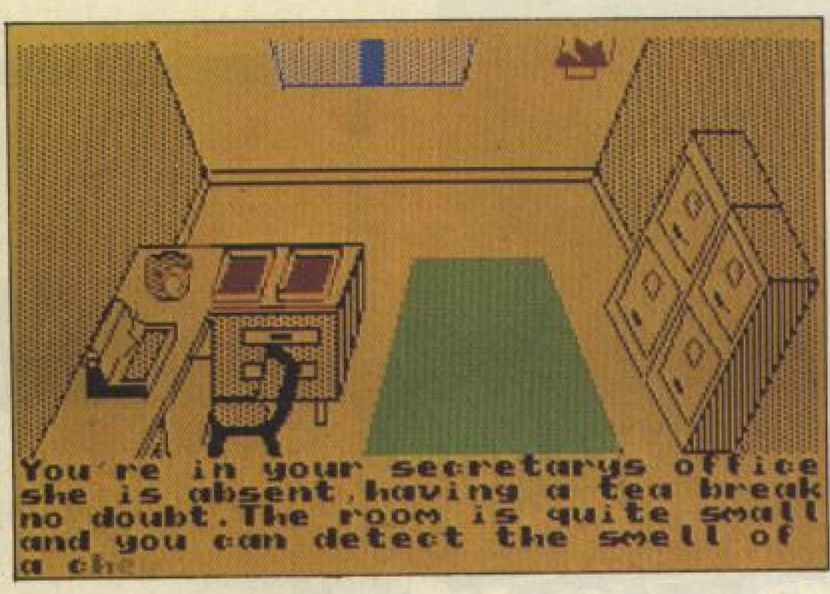
Golden Mask is a very competent adventure. The game has 85 locations, 25 of which display pictures, and has over 160 messages. It makes good use of spot effects, with lights and noise when moving certain items and falling



perform is too important to be left to human foibles and for this reason a small explosive device has been implanted in your brain to ensure your continued loyality.

The adventure begins with a view of your office. The picture here isn't too bad but it is slowly drawn and even more slowly shaded, and it's rather untidily scrolled about two thirds off the screen. The graphical quality becomes rather academic under these conditions. I make some fuss over the slow drawing for good reason: as the descriptions are long they tend to scroll off with your input and R for Redescribe goes via the picture again – quite a wait I can tell you. The view for the office picture, like some of the other room representations, is from the top side of one of the walls, a perspective which seems to work just fine.

The location descriptions do manage to create some atmosphere in their length. Just cop your eyes on this one, 'You're standing in your office. It is rather an untidy affair. You can see a sturdy desk with two drawers, one of which is slightly open, a telephone sits on top of the desk amidst a sea of papers and manilla files. A filing cabinet stands in one corner. There are also two uncomfortable-looking chairs, and a laden bookshelf. A picture and several charts hang on the walls. On your right is a window whilst the door is south. You are also aware of:– a book.' Up until the phone rings



(it rings six times!) summoning you to the briefing room to meet CJ, things are quite straightforward, with the GET ALL command, unusual in this type of adventure, proving most valuable.

Examining the bookshelf gives the same report as examining the book, a remark which seems odd unless a red herring is a tropical fish ('It's a book on tropical fish, a whole chapter is devoted to red herrings'). Once the boss has summoned you the program seems to clam up, not allowing you to do anything, although you are now allowed to leave your office, something denied you previously on the pretext that it was not your tea break. Exiting south to your secretary's office and west through an oak door brings you to corridors of typing pools.

Part Two is begun by saving the objects CJ has offered you at the end of Part One. The numbers of the equipment on offer are found by consulting the catalogue and I think you'll find six objects are your limit. In Part Two you have traced Kwok to his new operational base at his brother's mansion in Scotland. A further complication is now brought in as this brother is a member of the Chinese Consulate and as such enjoys the privilege of diplomatic immunity. A raid by the police is therefore out of the question. This is clearly your job, and the PM's instructions are to obtain the evidence to implicate Kwok, get him to divulge the name of the double agent who has infiltrated your ranks, and finally, terminate Stallion. By the time you reach Scotland only 17 of your 24 hours remain, and each move (including Redescribe) costs you six minutes. If the bull should kill you early on, the saved game from Part One must be loaded again, so take care.

Operation Stallion is a very worthy attempt to bring the excitement of a thriller to the adventure scene. I particularly liked the long and fascinating storyline to draw the player into the plot. There are one or two spelling mistakes (many centred around 'ie' order in words) but overall, a fine game.

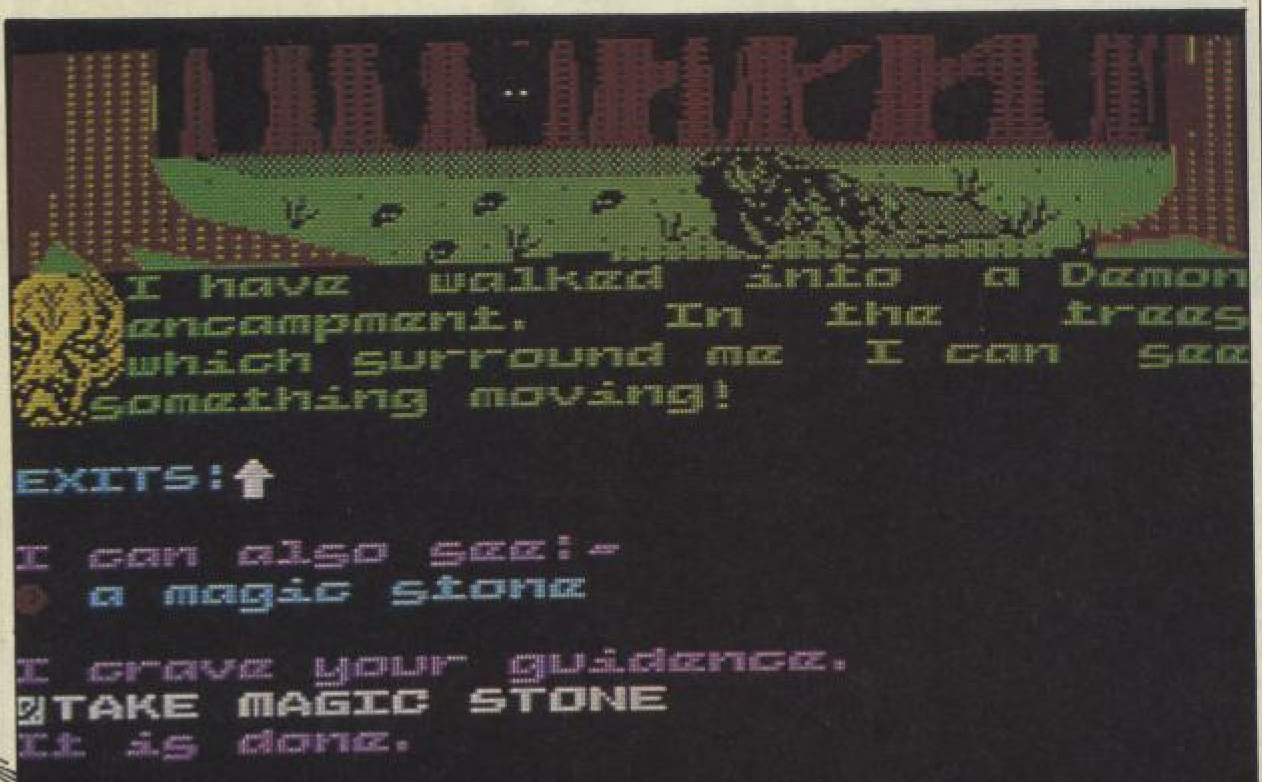
Difficulty: first part seems simple enough
Graphics: some are quite detailed though all are based on square shapes, eg doors, corridors and stairs
Presentation: average, to say the least
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast, but very slow graphics
General rating: interesting

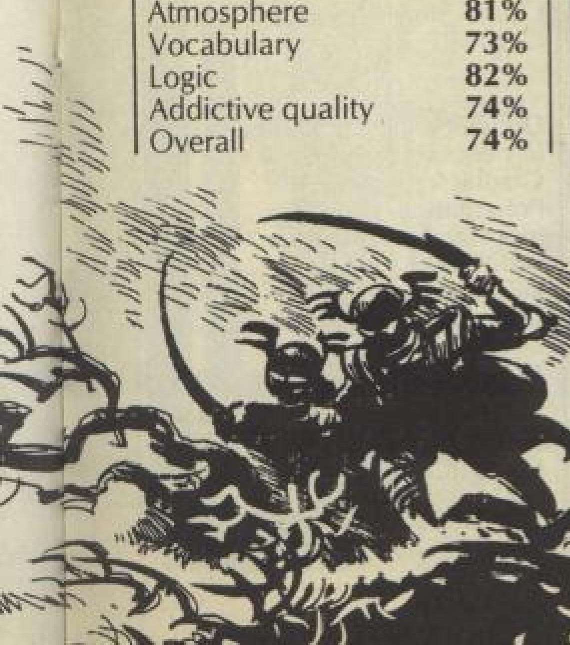
Atmosphere	77%
Vocabulary	78%
Logic	75%
Addictive quality	72%
Overall	73%

down holes. The game looks good and plays well and you can't ask for more than that. Compass live at 36 Globe Place, Norwich NR2 2SQ.

Difficulty: not difficult
Graphics: sometimes simple, other times detailed with unusual shading
Presentation: good use of colours
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast Quill
General rating: good, easygoing yarn

Atmosphere	81%
Vocabulary	73%
Logic	82%
Addictive quality	74%
Overall	74%



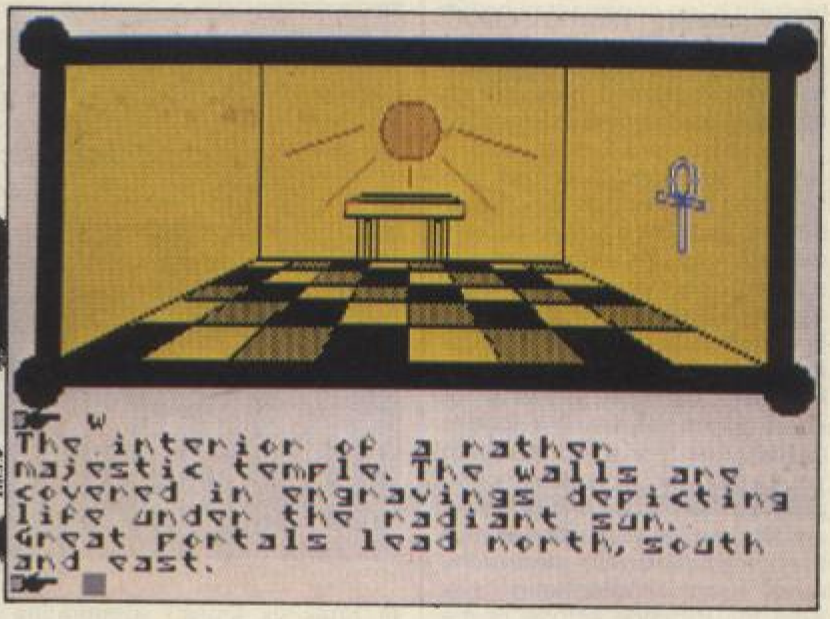


DEREK BREWSTER'S
Adventure Trail EXTRA

BOOK OF THE DEAD

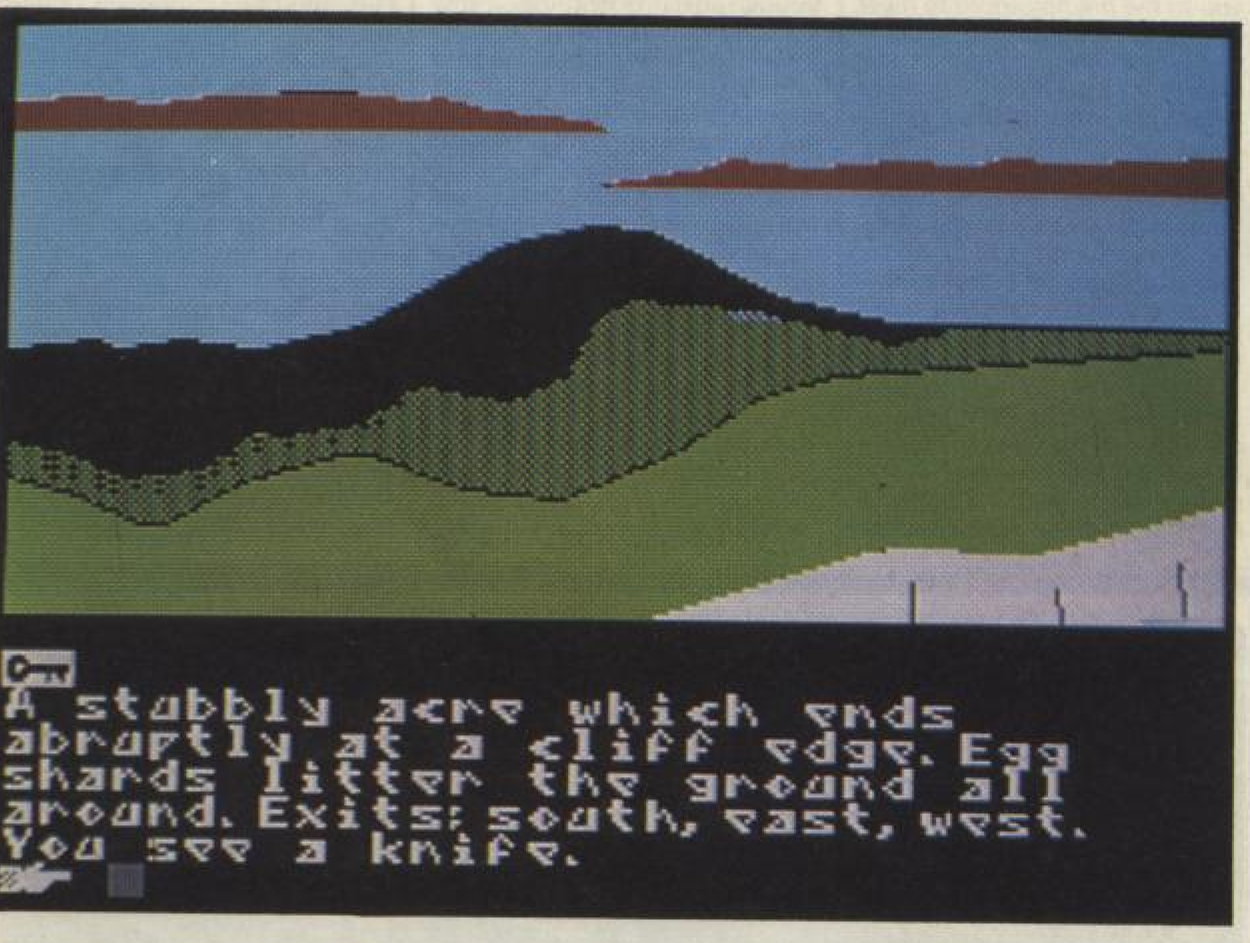
Producer: **The Essential Myth**
Price: **£3.95**
Authors: **M Davies, A Dean, L Hodgson**





With a name as good as The Essential Myth, this software house can't be bad. Although they're a mail-order only outfit, I was impressed by the way in which the game was submitted with all the details a reviewer might need.

This game's theme has real topical appeal for me, as I've just returned from a trip to the British Museum, where I wandered about for some time wondering where Tutenkhamen had got to (but too afraid to ask lest they think me just a top twenty man). Based upon the mythology of ancient Egypt, it makes several references to characters which actually exist in the tome of eternal knowledge, better known as the Collins English Dictionary (a cross between a dictionary and an encyclopedia).



It is here we find terse descriptions of the strange names that inhabit the Book of the Dead. Take Osiris, who was the ruler of the world and judge of the dead, and this Horus chappie, who was the solar god who quite liked to be seen with his ornate falcon's head. Throw in an Ibis, which is a wading bird found in warm regions, a Mangonel, which is a rock-throwing catapult contraption (although the picture does give a good clue here), and you should be armed with most of the terminology to see you well into the plot.

Your character is Kteth, a falcon-headed Egyptian godlet (albeit a rather minor one). Life among the gods has been blissful, but after aeons of peace disaster strikes. Your divine father, the great god Set, foully murders the Chief of All Gods, Osiris, in the hope of usurping his coveted position. His ambition is not to be realised though, as the whole pantheon of deities led by Osiris' rage-maddened son, Horus, rises against Set and throws him from the Other World to the World of Men.

It looks as though you'll be born banished from Paradise, but there is hope – some gods see no reason why you should be held accountable for the acts of your headstrong father, and offer their help to see you to the Other World. In this way the adventure presents you with a most unusual task – to reach the gods you must die, and in a nutshell this is what you must achieve to complete the adventure.

You begin your task trapped within the gooey albumen of an egg, and it won't take long before you have a cracking idea as to how to proceed. Mapping is almost a complete waste of time, as everything seems to lead to just about everything else. The game's appearance is particularly good. It's colourful, and although the mock-Egyptian character set makes for difficult reading, it adds to the already exotic atmosphere. A solid beep sounds as entries are typed, and both text and graphics appear promptly. The old *GAC* irritant whereby the last location's end tops a new description is still here, but the neat little hand pointing to the last input helps to break up the text.

Appearance is all very well, but what of the substance? Well, I found the game really entertaining. The problems are interesting and their solution a challenge – as each is solved you get that little self-satisfied glow which is the mark of a good adventure. Most of all I liked the intriguing way in which the characters are slowly introduced, keeping the player absorbed and creating a feeling that there's more good stuff round the corner.

Book of the Dead is The Essential Myth's first release. It is a two-part game, written using Incentive's *Graphic Adventure Creator*, the utility of the moment. The programming team learned so much during the game's formation that they plan to release *GAC* programming aids shortly, perhaps under the name *GAC-PAC*.

Book of the Dead is a fine adventure in just about every department. The theme, presentation and plot are all of a very high standard, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. The mail order address for The Essential Myth is 54 Church Street, Tewkesbury, Glos GL20 5RZ.

Difficulty: the friendly vocabulary ensures progress
Graphics: colourful
Presentation: good
Input facility: verb/noun with IT and THEM
Response: good
General rating: very good

Atmosphere	**89%**
Vocabulary	**86%**
Logic	**79%**
Addictive quality	**89%**
Overall	**88%**

INHERITANCE

Producer: **Infogrames**
Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Gilles Blancon**

This is another Infogrames product, this time composed of three parts. As with all these games, the lack of instruction is seen as an integral part of the challenge. To progress it's best just to start pressing keys and learn from what happens.

Here's some of the everyday story of how our chap, down on his luck, is whisked off to Las Vegas to earn bags loads of money. The buildings were mostly dilapidated, and succeeded each other with monotonous regularity. In his sordid room on the 17th floor in one such squalid building, Peter lay dejectedly on his bed. Debts were mounting up and there was not even a glimmer of hope on the horizon. He hardly dared move outside his room for fear of meeting one of his creditors. With no rent paid for several months the landlady was on the verge of throwing him out. Then a letter arrived with an airline ticket to Las Vegas, £200, and a note explaining the death of his aunt, and how he was the sole heir to her fortune. Just one problem – he has to repeat her achievement of winning a million dollars in one night in Las Vegas.

Part One has a very familiar look to it where the object is to move a cursor round a screen and find items of varying interest. In this case you must pack a bag full of goodies to distribute to the various creditors who prevent you leaving the building for the airport. Giving up to each character what you have borrowed placates them long enough to make good your escape. There are some nice touches here with one set of keys on the keyboard packing and unpacking your bag and separating and sorting the various objects you meet. Movement via doors is achieved by placing the roaming cursor onto a door handle, while placing it on the doorbell in some cases sees a chap opening his door. If this part is going well it shouldn't be too long before you see the taxi, that is if you don't run out of time, an occurence of which you will be made fully aware as you will end up buried, dead and gone.

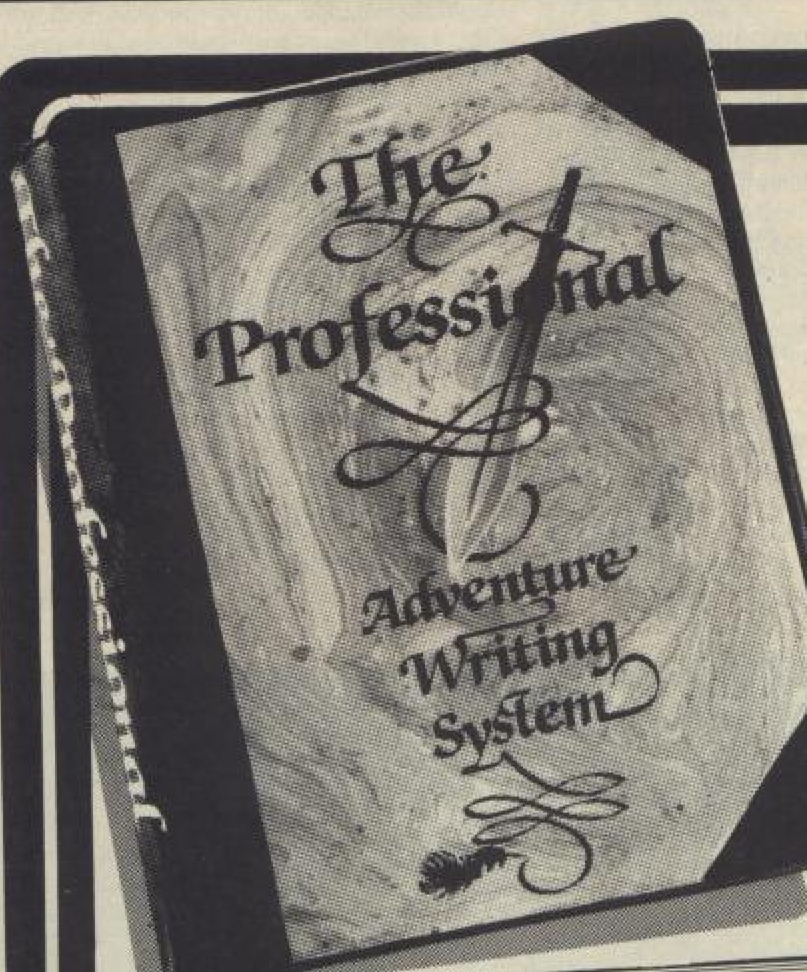


Part Two has you at the airport where you must get your passport, and sees you becoming involved with a hijacker, before leaving and looking for a bus to Vegas. Part Three is pure gambling.

Inheritance is a typically good-looking Infogrames game, consisting of three parts which are played in order, with a code transferred between each. I don't know if I was that much impressed, and remain puzzled at the lack of lucid instructions, even for a reviewer, but no-one can doubt the superb graphics and the clever ideas which have become an Infogrames hallmark.

Difficulty: lack of instruction causes some difficulty
Graphics: very good
Presentation: neat
Input facility: keywords and sentences
Response: okay
General rating: another popular Infograme game

Atmosphere	82%
Vocabulary	86%
Logic	86%
Addictive quality	88%
Overall	86%



FIVE STEPS TO HEAVEN

WRITING A GOOD ADVENTURE

For over four years DEREK BREWSTER has been writing adventure games, and for the past three he's been reviewing them as well. With all this accumulated experience, he now lays out some golden dos and don'ts to constructing your own adventures.

STEP ONE

Does the world need your adventure?

The first thing to ask yourself is just what your adventure might have to offer an unsuspecting public. Will it surprise in any way or be innovative in theme, plot or screen presentation?

Technical innovation in adventuring is important precisely because it *is* so rare. After all there's a vast wealth of old adventures and you must give the player some reason for choosing your game over those already in existence. Therefore it wouldn't be such a bad idea for the programmer to take a good look at adventures old and new to see the kind of areas in which the budding writer might excel.

STEP TWO

Choose your medium

Some of the earliest adventures were written in BASIC. Beginners All-purpose Symbolic Instruction Code is very well-disposed towards humans, but microcomputers take a long time to translate the language and hence programs are slow, too slow for today's commercial games.

Machine code, a language much more easily understood and worked by the computer, is super fast, but it isn't a language designed for humans, and many struggle with a tongue that assumes a great intimacy between programmer and machine. Utilities provide a relatively easy way to sample the speeds of machine code programming without the need to climb the strenuous learning curve of the machine's language. For a modest loss of room for innovative manoeuvrings, these routines provide adventures which are consistently better than most, for they are at the very least competently programmed.

The most famous utility was the *Quill*, updated with the *Illustrator* and *Patch and Press*, but this has now been overhauled, revamped and put out as the most impressive utility to date, *The Professional Adventure Writer* (*PAW*), a utility which is probably good enough for just about all mainstream adventures as it does just about everything you need.

In between, Incentive released a very useful aid named the *Graphic Adventure Creator*, whilst many smaller concerns released utilities for those on the lookout for the exotic, or perhaps a different look. This last is an important point as adventure cloning can bore players, hence the importance attached to *PAW* offering several ways of displaying the adventure written with it. In general, an adventure written using a utility must be innovative wherever it can, as people expect more from a game they believe they themselves might have written – if only they had the time.

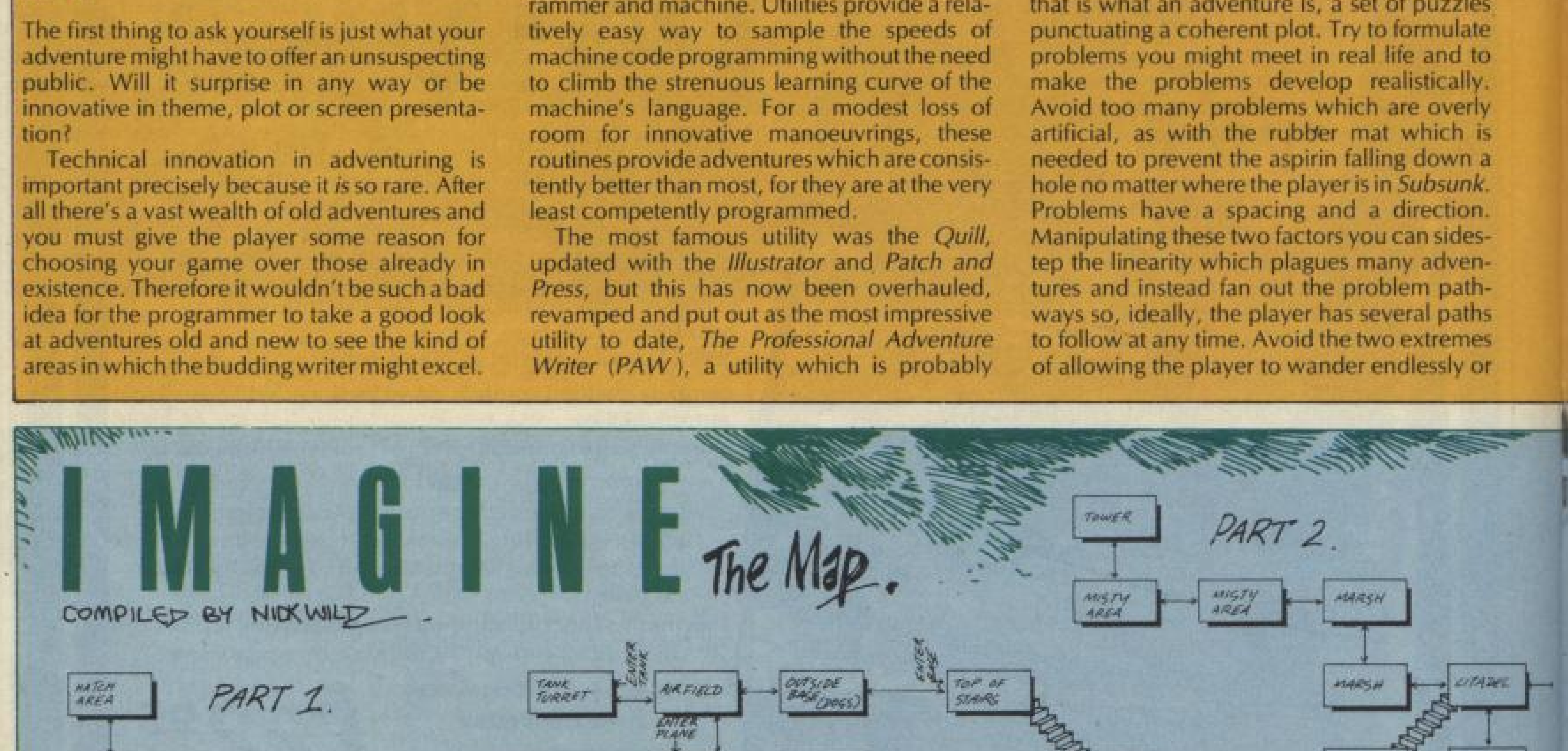
STEP THREE

Begin creating your world

Here's your chance to say something intelligently and coherently to a captive audience. All should be in context and keep concisely to the theme. You can take a leaf out of the notes of novelists here and try a little research into your chosen theme. For example, a game chronicling the travels of Ulysses should be just that, with the finished article being, in my mind, no way compromised because it might be considered educational. If I learn something new by watching a TV program, or playing an adventure, then the source of that new information goes up in my esteem.

The geography and bearings of your world should be readily understood with deserts wide, crevasses narrow and mazes convoluted, but don't overdo the mazes and always give them a reason for being there.

At this stage you should consider the problems that will make up your adventure – for that is what an adventure is, a set of puzzles punctuating a coherent plot. Try to formulate problems you might meet in real life and to make the problems develop realistically. Avoid too many problems which are overly artificial, as with the rubber mat which is needed to prevent the aspirin falling down a hole no matter where the player is in *Subsunk*. Problems have a spacing and a direction. Manipulating these two factors you can sidestep the linearity which plagues many adventures and instead fan out the problem pathways so, ideally, the player has several paths to follow at any time. Avoid the two extremes of allowing the player to wander endlessly or





becoming trapped in the first location; instead aim for five or six locations leading into relatively easy problems to ease the adventurer in to the game and thereby building confidence.

STEP FOUR
Design

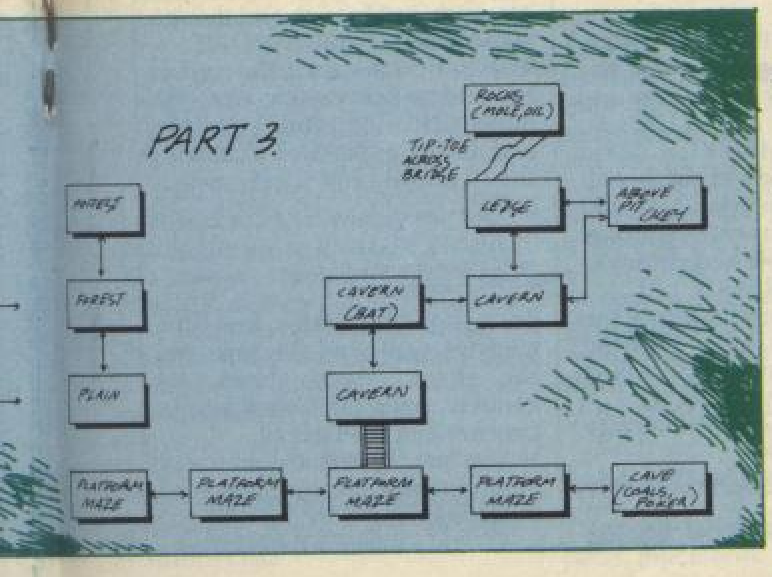
At one time design might have been curtailed by your programming ability or the utility you employed, but what with the likes of *PAW*, design can once again be fruitfully employed. Involved are ponderables such as screen layout, spacing and look of the text, right through to how many pictures, and of what size, should illustrate the adventure. Personally, I prefer a few well chosen graphics of high quality as each is then a reward for progress thus far, with the player perhaps really contemplating and enjoying the artwork. This is better than pressing any key to get rid of a shoddy sketch at every other location, which is the case in poor games. Think carefully before using white as a background at all locations, and if the border colour is to vary, try and vary it subtly, as dramatic variations cause a flash.

STEP FIVE
Watch your language

More than any other area, good vocabulary is a sign of a good, well considered adventure. Be very loath to increase the difficulty of the game by choosing obscure verb/noun word couplings. Friendly games try to anticipate the attempts of the player with logical and common couplings forming the solution, and helpful messages accompanying couplings which are close but do not quite show an exact understanding of the problem.

Be careful not to mix opposites, for example DISEMBARK should reverse BOARD and LEAVE – ENTER, but not BOARD *and* LEAVE, with no DISEMBARK. These errors are most easily spotted and rectified if the game is shown to many who have had no part in the writing of the adventure. Play-testing is indeed an important final stage.

So there it is, a guide to writing an adventure. Clearly not all these steps are hard and fast rules, but an author would be well-advised to consider each stage of writing carefully, for it is in the department of planning that good adventures are born.





We're changing our format for the special this month. Instead of answering direct questions, I have supplied a few solutions to various problems in a wide selection of games. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who have sent in tips, for without them this section would not be possible. When a tip has been used, I have credited the helpful reader at the end of the section.

AFTERSHOCK

Trouble getting out of building?
Take chair to lift, climb on chair, examine ceiling, remove panel and climb out of lift.
Can't drain the flooded tunnel?
Go to storm drain, switch torch on, go E, S, S, S, to sluicegate then S,E,E,E to find handle. Return to sluicegate, connect handle to shaft and lubricate mechanism. Open sluicegate.
Can't get the oil?
Go to park area and examine bin to find bottle.

M KERR, Bognor Regis

THE BOGGIT

Having problems getting out of the house?
Open chest, climb into chest, get diary and examine it,climb out of chest, examine door and type in Frodo's birthday.
Trouble passing the spider and web?
Pull web and go NE to meet spider. When it has had it's say give it the sandwich from Beorn's house. Pull web again before moving on.

BORED OF THE RINGS

Can't get through the Morona gate?
Go to Mt Featherwop and collect the pepper, then take it to the gate and drop it, Giblet will sneeze and blow a hole in the gate.
To get a coin to buy a map, insert the battery into the vending machine.

GARY JUKES, West Midlands

BUGSY

Having difficulty raising the money for a pistol?
Go to Deviney's Bar and fight. When approached by two hoods, talk to Louie and after exchanging greetings buy the mask from them. Go out and find a newsboy, wear the mask and ask for protection money. Find the other boys and do the same. You should then have enough money.
Trouble with the police?
Bribe them!

DARREN and JASON MANN

DRACULA

If you are attacked/killed in the dream sequence, here are the solutions. The food you choose will determine the type of dream you have.
If you are attácked by a wild dog look around, look table, get bone, give dog bone, then return to bedroom.
Choked to death – get to bed sooner.
Killed by innkeeper – never leave your bedroom without a lit lamp.
Attacked by wild birds – make sure you close your window before going to sleep.
Forced to jump from your own window – this is unavoidable, try a different combination of foods.
To prevent cutting yourself shaving, get the tray and polish it.

DAVID EDWARDS, Bedford

ERIC THE VIKING

To please the eagle, feed it with boiled mutton.
To get the silver amulet throw the stick.
To please the dragon get the feather from its nose.
To get the stone fruit, shake the tree and then plant it in the mountainside where you begin.

M WRIGHT, King's Lynn

RED MOON

Examine oyster for fungus treasure.
Play the dulcimer to entertain Bostog.
Wear the gloves to take the sword.
Eat the mushroom to enter the tiny door.
Give Kellf a bottle of water.
Wear bracers to carry more.
'Obis' opens the sarcophagus.
'Ollabin' reduces the mummy to dust.
Rub out the red line in the red room so that you don't cross it.
Wear the wellies to enter the metal room.

R C HEWISON

ROBIN OF SHERLOCK

To enter the convent you need to be wearing the nun's habit.
To get gold for the peasant, just ROB BISHOP, TAKE GOLD and go south until you meet the peasant again.
To prevent Grandma blasting you, you will need to find the sheriff in the castle and when he runs off, take the flag he leaves behind.

JOHN WILSON, Rochdale

ROBIN OF SHERWOOD

To escape from the dungeon – stand on prisoner, examine grating, call guard, grab his foot, strangle guard, take the sword, slide the bolt, open grating and go grating.
Kill Belleme with the silver arrow you win in Nottingham.

R C HEWISON

SEABASE DELTA

To get new travel permit, take old card to auto-clerk and sign form.
To get the object from the table you need to wear the flippers.
To wake the hen you need the gum and then blow bubble.
To open the heavy metal door you need the tape and tape player.

SINBAD AND THE GOLDEN SHIP

To kill the wizard, enter the cage, pick up the iron rail and hit the wizard with it.
To get past the dragon, cut his chain with the axe.
To summon the Genie, take the oil lamp from the chest and say 'SHAMAN'.

SIMON AUSTIN

EYE OF BAIN

Give honey to bear.
To pass shapeless beast, carry ruby and say 'fire'. Show cross to skeleton. To enter temple, light the pile of wood with the torch.

SMUGGLER'S COVE

Use the ladder to span the trench.
To get to the ledge in safety, you need to throw the rope and wear the shoes and then climb rope.
To avoid rat bites you need the cat, it will follow you if you have the fish.
To escape at the end you must HARNESS DONKEY, ENTER ELEVATOR and THROW CARROTS.

SNOW QUEEN

If you are having difficulty talking to the raven, show it the opal to attract its attention.
If the city gates are closed when you arrive, go to the sheltered niche with dry leaves and sleep.
If you have trouble with the big blind dog, just drop the mothballs as it relies on smell.

SORCERER OF CLAYMOURGE CASTLE

To dry towel squeeze it twice when over lava.
To avoid dying near dragon, drink potion.
The stars are stored in tree using permeability.

SPIDERMAN

To defeat Electro and Dr Octopus, grab Dr Octopus before hitting Electro, they should both now be stunned.
All the gems should be stored with Madam Web.
To start presses, take Lizard man, Electro, Dr Octopus, desk etc to the scales and keep adding things until the dial shows over 950. Then go to Ringmaster's room and type on computer, start.

PATRICK HARMES, Hants

SUBSUNK

To unblock the sink you need the rubber sucker from the toolbox and the broom from the broom cupboard. Then attach sucker to broom and plunge basin.
Drop the insulating mat on the ground to prevent the pill from rolling away and getting lost.

TEMPLE TERROR

Move the rock to enter the cave.
Use paint to paint glass cover to mirror.
The glass cover covers an axe and is removed by saying the magic word found on the scroll.
Use the blanket to smother the fire.
To cross the pit, throw and swing on the rope.

DON'T PANIC SOLUTION

To complete part one:

1. From the bedroom go south, down the stairs, take the rod.
2. Go out, south twice, east three times, south, east, in the bank, take the credit card.
3. Go out, west twice, in the garden centre, take the spade.
4. Go out, east, north, west three times, north twice, dig, take the worms.
5. Go south three times, go fishing with the rod and the worms. Take the burble fish (this must be TAKE BURBLE FISH, because TAKE FISH didn't work because fish was used as a command).
6. Go North, east three times, north, east, in. Ford Escort is here in the pub. He will now follow you if you have the fish.
7. Take and examine Ford's bag. Take the torch. If you have to drop something, do not drop the credit card or the torch.
8. Go out, west, south, type in WAIT. Ford will open the spaceship door. Switch on the torch. (TURN ON TORCH does not work.)
9. Note: in the Vulgan ship, don't wander around or you'll get hopelessly lost! Go east twice, south twice, take the key. Go north twice, west, north, unlock the door. You'll be at the spacesuit dispenser: insert the card.
10. Take and wear the suit (Ford will do the same). Go south twice, east twice, press the button. You'll be ejected into space and be picked up by the Geldof's Heart spaceship.
11. Open your eyes, go south twice, south, south, south east. You will now meet Marlon the Paralytic Android. Go west twice and you've finished.

To complete part two:

1. Type in the password: BRYAN HATES TIMMY (all in capitals).
2. From the start, go north, open the cupboard, take and examine the cassette. Then just mess about for the next five or so turns.
3. Examine the computer console, and push the lever (don't pull it!). Land the ship, go out, then north, east, west, south.
4. Pull the bell rope, get into Smarty fartblast's C5. He will then take you back to his lab and teleport you to the other part of the planet.
5. When you arrive, go north, east and into the C5. Go west, south, east twice, south, get out of the C5. Go east, into the beach hut, take the surfboard.
6. Go out, and south to the island. Open the chest, take the coin and go north back to the beach. Go north, east enter the top shop, buy the water pistol. Go out, west, south, and into the C5.
7. Go west, jump over the crevasse. Go west, in the toilet, fill the water pistol. Go south, west and shoot the dalek.
8. From the receptionist, go east twice and in. Enter 'TYPE LOAD' and 'PRESS ENTER' as according to the tape instructions. Go north, insert the tape in the deck and finish the game.

To complete part three:

1. Type in the password: 'WE WANT A MILLION' all in capitals.
2. Take and read the brochures. Once you end up outside the shopping centre, go east six times. Press '2'.
3. On the second floor, go south, take and examine the wallet. Take the credits.
4. Go east, buy and wear the dining suit. Go west, north, west three times. Buy the battery recharger. Go east four times. Press '3'.
5. Go north, buy the goldfish bowl. (BUY BOWL, not BUY GOLDFISH.) Go south, west twice, south, enter the restaurant.
6. Go north, east three times. Press '1'. Go west five times, south twice, in. Give the bowl to the fortune teller, take the fuse and battery. Recharge the battery. Go out.
7. Go north, east six times, break the glass, take the hammer, hit the control box with it. Go west, south. Ford will open the spaceship door.
8. Pull the lever: the ship takes off. Examine the console, examine the panel, insert the fuse. Press the button.
9. Once on the Vulgar belching star cruiser, go west, south, east. Take the gadget, insert the recharged battery, press the button and you've done it.

EUREKA

PREHISTORIC
To kill the man in black, throw the axe you made out of the flint and bone and do not move until it hits him.
ROMAN
To escape from the leper colony give the mad leper the egg the chicken lays (buy the chicken and go west).
WARTIME GERMANY
To open the shed get the bunch of keys at the guarded gate and go into the lorry from the window ledge (It is possible keep trying).
MODERN CARIBBEAN
To get into the house, throw the carcass of the panther into the pool and get the metal strip which can be used on the window.
To get into the secret stairway examine the book.
Use the spanner to open the steel door.

H JONSSON, Woking

ESPIONAGE ISLAND

To get knife give beads to native.
To get the beads, go to the wreckage and feel corner. To cross the crevasse, put branch and then go south.
To pass the tank, go to the control hut and switch switch, go to the landing clearing, remove the light and insert explosive. Return to the control hut and switch switch.

KAYLETH

To get the cassettes from the canister you need the tape and the gloves. Wear gloves, get canister, open tape, stick tape to canister and then get all.
If you are having trouble with your eyes burning out, you need the lens from the Pyxis.

S BENNETT, Manchester

BOOK OF THE DEAD

The complete solution for the Book of the Dead follows, with explanation for the moves, and alternative vocabulary which can be used. Note that no attempt is made to score maximum points, or to explore various interesting off-the-route parts of the adventure.

Part One. BREAK EGG: or SMASH/CRACK SHELL. You are born into the game inside an egg – a reminder that you are (or were) a falcon-headed god; GET KNIFE; SOUTH, SHEAR SHEEP. To the sheep; An EXAMINE SHEEP message here gives a clue. You are now the proud owner of a fleece; drop KNIFE: no longer needed; SOUTH, SOUTH: to the lake; WASH FLEECE: or CLEAN. It's dirty when first sheared; EAST, NORTH: to the weights location; LIFT WEIGHTS: or USE. This builds your muscles. EXAMINE WEIGHTS gives a clue; SOUTH: to the boulder location; GET BOULDER: it's too heavy unless above body-building has been done. Getting the boulder unblocks the channel – water rushes from the lake (emptying it) over the cliff, soaking a hermit underneath. HELP works here. SOUTH: to the mangonel; LOAD MANGONEL WITH BOULDER or PUT BOULDER IN MANGONEL; FIRE MANGONEL: or SHOOT. The fired boulder hits the bird which flies over the lake. NORTH: to the lake; GET IBIS: the bird can now be picked up from the (empty) lake where it falls. You also pick up an ankh, which it was carrying in its beak. NORTH, WEST: to the temple. PRAY TO AMON-RA or WORSHIP. Amon-Ra is a sun god, he causes the sun to shine brighter, drying the washed fleece. Amon-Ra demands you carry the sacred ankh when worshipping him though. SOUTH, NORTH: to lake again; GET FLEECE: now dry; SOUTH; to the southern cliff edge; PLUCK IBIS: getting a quill which you need later; DROP IBIS: no longer needed; THROW FLEECE OVER CLIFF: THROW QUILL TOO: these drop to the bottom of the cliff. You are now carrying nothing; DOWN: If any objects are carried, the rope snaps; GET FLEECE, GET QUILL: picking them up again.

UP: The rope now snaps since you are carrying things. But it's okay as you are safe at the bottom. TUG or PULL ROPE doesn't quite break the rope – you've got to actually try and climb up it. The rope has only one weak point, and now this is broken it can be used again; GET ROPE: EAST: to the wet hermit under the cliff; DRY HERMIT WITH THE FLEECE: the hermit is pleased, and gives you a magic scroll; READ SCROLL: invokes a gnome who asks for a command. The gnome is actually Bes, a friendly god. CURE ME: or RID CURSE/DISEASE: the gnome cures you, ridding you of the time problem; EAST: to the shallows of the Nile; EXAMINE RIVER: or NILE/WATER. Clue in room description 'Examining the situation, you appear to be . . . ' HELP gives assistance here too. Some stilts are hidden on the river bed. GET STILTS: WEAR STILTS; you are now taller, enabling you to cross the river without drowning! EAST, NORTH, NORTH, SOUTH: to the town gates. You lose the fleece and stilts on the way – but they're not needed anyway. WAIT, or any other move such as INVENTORY/LOOK etc. A woman appears, mutters 'SOMETHING' to the town gatekeeper and is let in. She then goes to the tavern in the town. This is important; if you don't wait for her she will never get there. NORTH: or HELLO/GREET/TALK/SPEAK (TO) GATEKEEPER. He asks you for the watchword to get in . . . which is SOMETHING of course. HELP is useful here. NORTH, DOWN: to the beggar in the gutter; GET COIN: heartless isn't it?; UP, WEST, WEST, EAST, EAST: To the rubbish dump, where there are many objects to pick up. A convoluted route must be taken to avoid a band of thugs which circle: tavern – street end – street corner – back street – rubbish dump. You are warned when the thugs are approaching. GET BODY OF SHABTI, WEST WEST, EAST, EAST: avoiding thugs by hiding in the quay off the back street; GET URN; WEST. WEST. EAST EAST. GET FLUTE: WEST, WEST, EAST EAST, GET BOWL: WEST. WEST, EAST, EAST, GET NEEDLE; WEST, WEST, EAST, EAST, GET MEAT; WEST, WEST, EAST, SOUTH, SOUTH; to the market again avoiding thugs en route.

TOWER OF DESPAIR

To dispose of Death, type in STEALTH to enter stealth mode and then USE DAGGER.
To survive in Despair, cover your eyes.
To take the globe in Hope, wear the gauntlet.
Dispel the force field by dropping the jade.

JERRY VAUGHAN, Caerphilly

TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY

To kill the dragon you need the wooden staff from one of the towers, then you must hit the dragon with it.
To kill the witch with the gold staff you must give her the silver dagger that attacks its wielder. No other attacks will work as she has a staff that turns all your attacks.

VALKYRIE 17

To get money for the hotel bill, pawn the necklace. To return to the hotel, get the string from outside the butchers and ride the cable car by tying the string to the lever.

BILLY DINGEALL, Edinburgh

VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE

To kill the python just open the can and the bird will do the rest.
Drop the log to cross the chasm.
In two-pit room, water plant twice and then dial paraquat on the utility belt to kill the triffid.
To pass the wombat, drop the pirate's chest and open it to release the ferret.

KENTILLA

To pass the Sirens, put wax in your ears, it's found in the Urgamaul's cell.

MOUNTAINS OF KET

To go through the dead-end wall in mint condition, carry wand and say 'polo'.
To cross 20' crevasse, carry less than six objects and drink elixir.

GOLDEN BATON

To kill the wolf, use the sword found in the rotting leaves. To unlock the massive doors in castle rub the golden ring (found up tree in hollow).
To fill lamp squeeze oil sodden rag.
To kill lizard man, wave the glowing quartz.

THE HELM

To get the key from the well you will need the hook and the rope, then tie rope and go fishing at well.
To progress through the ice pit you will need to use the salt. Before collecting the salt you will need to have the plastic bag to prevent it from dissolving.
To pass the Psysk you will need to shine torch, this will temporarily blind you so you can't be hypnotised.

THE HULK

To find Dr Strange, enter the ant's dome with wax, examine base board, plug the gas outlet and bite lip.
To pull ring enter tunnel with button, type 'remember nightmare' when you are the Hulk, go west and pull ring.
To destroy egg but not bio gem, go to fuzzy area, remember nightmare, go north and eat egg, leave bio gem in room until all other gems are collected.

D SIMMONS, Doncaster

IMAGINATION

To move between the different parts, pinch arm.

KNIGHT'S QUEST

Trouble with the snake?
Strangle it.
To enter the boat, board it.
To release boat, cast off.
To stop freezing to death, wear cloak from witch's tower.

LORDS OF TIME

FIRST ZONE
Wave lodestone to get keys.
Get petrol from car and save tin of catfood and tin opener for next zone.
SECOND ZONE
Pour petrol on wood near mammoth and light it.
Give opened catfood to sabre-toothed tiger and pull tooth (you will need the spear to keep him back). This tooth will satisfy the tooth fairy in part one.
To get icicle to fall – shout.
Throw icicle into lake to make it freeze over.
THIRD ZONE
If you're having trouble with the skeleton – throw painter pebble at it.
FOURTH ZONE
To find parchment, dig in cave with soft sand twice.

MAFIA CONTRACT

At car you must open trunk and cut the blue wire to defuse the bomb. After this get in the car and go east.
At the station, buy a ticket by inserting the coins.
To get the drink you need – give the tramp the newspaper and drink the meths.

MINDSHADOW

To find the map to enable you to get through the quicksand – climb down the vine to the cave and dig.
To start a fire to attract a ship you will need the straw, steel and stone. Drop the straw and rub the steel with the stone.

BRIAN BOYD, Bristol

WARLORD

To pass the guard, wear Lug's helmet.
Rest at the river bank to receive the sword.
To kill the bear you need the sword and shield.
To survive the cavern fire wear the white cloak.
To scare off the demons wear the amulet.

R C HEWISON

WITCHES CAULDRON

To get past fire you must put it out with magic dust.
To open coffin, oil it with oil lamp.
To kill dragon you will need help from the lion.
To escape from snake blow whistle.
To open south door in room with signs on wall you must have a bone, then make a skeleton key.
To turn into a gorilla you need whisky, shell, eye from toy and diamond.
To turn into man you need a tied ribbon, gold coin, ten pence and lions hair.

ZZZZ

To enter the phone box you must wear the tie.
To fill the water pistol you must put the bucket on the hook in the well and turn the handle twice. The bucket will now be full of water and you can fill the pistol.

PLANET OF DEATH

To dispel the forcefield you must first have the mirror. Then REFLECT FIELD, where the computer will respond it has weakened it. Do this until the response 'nothing happens' appears and then type VANITY WALTZ.

REBEL PLANET

If you have trouble at the customs, give card and then go complex. To get the laser sword past the customs carry it in the lite Kube.
To escape from the jail, bend bars with wrench and then activate laser before climbing through hole. Attack the policer as soon as you meet it.

JOHN WILSON, Rochdale

PRICE OF MAGICK

Get wolfsbane to stop werewolf from attacking.
Smash the mirror to find the prism.
Throw salt at the slug.
Cast FIX to kill Wight.
The red moon makes you young, only twice.
Cast MAD on yourself and give ashes to pass through the glowing gate.

ADAM ELLIS, Oxford

NEVER ENDING STORY

Make sure you have the glowglobe before you go east from the church.
To enter the tower you must unlock the door when you have the golden key, then go east.
To enter the Empress' quarters just say please.

JOHN WILSON, Rochdale

MORDON'S QUEST

To cross the quicksand – drop the blanket over it.
To kill the pygmy – get the berries, thorns and bamboo and make blowpipe.
To pass the plant – feed it with the pygmy.
To escape from the arena – smoke the cigar in front of Caesar.

EMMA HEGGIE, Salisbury

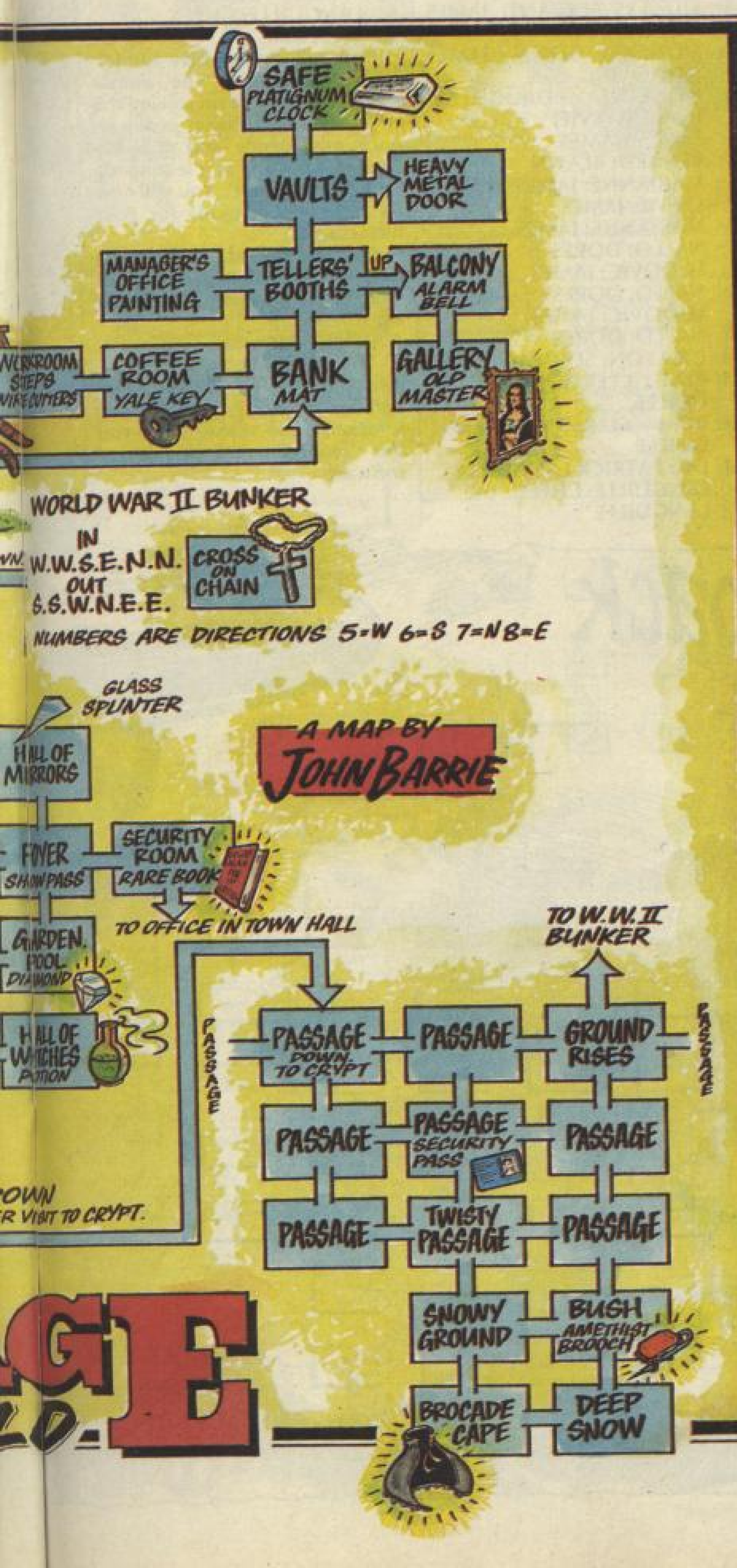




MINDSTONE

Buy the object off the pixie and trade it with the wood elf for the tiger amulet.
Swap the tiger amulet for the kranos sorcerer's talisman.
The talisman can be used to open the doomgate.
The backdoor pass to Nemesar's palace can be bought at the bar in carokot.

ROBERT C BEEVER, Penistone



JAH BUG BRENDAN?

Dear Derek,
I have discovered a bug on *GAC* that not only wastes memory, but is a nuisance as well. I don't know if I'm the only *GAC* user to encounter this joke, but I'm glad just to complete an adventure despite this.

What I am bickering on about are the words 'Jah Brendan!!' which occasionally appear in the top left corner of the screen while I am programming. When these words appear I can't get back to the main menu, but when I'm lucky the words disappear and everything returns to normal.

The utility itself works fine but I'm sick of this message flashing on the screen! It has even happened while working on the graphics. This time I thought the game had crashed, but upon trying to BREAK, it worked. This is no ordinary bug, it wastes memory and often destroys my data after hours of hard work. So, who's been mucking about with my *GAC* which I paid handsomely for. I can't be the only one to have fallen victim to this nuisance.

Stephen Teasdale, Cumbria

Well, Stephen, the first thing to question is whether some rival has sneaked into where you work on your pet projects and tampered with your program. If this seems unlikely then it looks like some chap at Incentive has been fooling around. Either way, your letter has now given the scoundrel some publicity which will no doubt give the culprit some amusement.

DB

DUE'D THE OBSCURE

Dear Derek,
With regard to the letter you published on the subject of getting old adventure games, I have been running an adventure swap club and it works like this. People send the game they wish to swap and a list of at least ten games they want. If no swap has been found within a month, the game is returned and their name, address and swap will be kept on file for a further three months. When a suitable swap comes in they will be notified and arrangements made.

It goes without saying that only originals can be swapped. At the moment this club is limited to adventures not arcade games, but may be expanded. *Subsunk* is on offer at the moment for swap with *Seabase Delta*, *Gremlins*, *Sherlock* and others. Some rare and obscure titles are also on offer. Furthermore, adventure help is being offered and includes a number of complete solutions too numerous to list.

Anyone interested please send game and list of swaps, an SAE and a cheque/PO for 50p to cover the cost of replies to: 31 Dequincey House, Sutton Estate, Salford, Manchester M6 7BU

Wayne Styles

Dear Derek,
Thanks for **Margo Porteus**'s advice on finding old games. I'm afraid it wasn't much use though. Yes, I have written to Firebird. They sent me back a catalogue with '*Subsunk/Helm* no longer available' on it. I've trekked round all the local shops, used school trips as excuses to go to other towns, trekked round, asked and generally got a bit cheesed off. Yes, it does sound a bit much to do for a couple of ancient games, but I enjoyed *Seabase Delta* so much, and, well – you know what I mean!

Anyway (and if you print this Derek, I promise I won't hassle you ever again – honest!) what I want to say is this. If anyone is willing to sell me *Subsunk* or *The Helm*, I will gladly buy it from them, and pay postage etc.

Scott Robinson, Lincoln

CRACKING THAT KRAKOD

Dear Derek,
I have just finished *Kobyashi Naru*, a budget adventure from Mastertronic, and thought that you might like the solution for future reference.

The game, in which you endeavour to join the immortals, is split into three parts, each completely independent of each other.

TASK ONE: KNOWLEDGE

1. You start on a plain. Pick up the scimitax – a huge sword which returns like a boomerang. Ignore the ani-

mals.

2. Go South;
a) analyse the Niecor plant to get leaf.
b) analyse the tree. This will inform you that the tree has pods. Throw the scimitax at the stems. The scimitax will return, and you can pick up the pods.
3. Go North again, and then East. You will be caught by a Giant Krakod;
a) cut the tentacles.
b) activate the pod (you will find that it will excrete a liquid if examined) which leaks a black liquid.
c) throw the pod into the maw. The Krakod will throw you over a thorn wall.
4. There is a fungi here, but it is useless. Go South.
5. It is impossible to penetrate the red mist;
a) pick up the blue flower. This is what you had to get to finish the task.
b) however, you are now being poisoned so use the leaf to cure yourself.
6. Go back North. Ascend the obelisk. You will see a sign saying 'wot no vertigo' hmm. Jump the barrier.
7. Make your way West to the start location and go North.

This marks the end of Knowledge when all of your possessions will be taken – not very friendly.

Ewan McEachran, Staffs

Ewan goes on to give the solutions to WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING, but you wouldn't want me to give the whole game away just like that, would you?

DB

TELL SIDNEY THE AFFAIR'S OVER

Dear Sirs,
Here is the solution to the game *Sidney Affair* by Infogrames. It took me about two and a half hours to complete.

First, load in Part One. Here you are shown the scene of the crime where Mr Sidney was shot. You must position the magnifying glass over the body's right trouser pocket to find the briefcase key. You will also find a wallet in the left hand jacket pocket. In the briefcase you find a diary and a black and white photograph. If you search the rest of the scene you will find a bullet hole in the wall which is about three spaces to the left of the door. This completes the first scene. You will then be shown a room where the shot was fired. On the window, just below the latch, there is a fingerprint. On the top of the plant-pot you will find the cigarette butt and on the floor behind the curtain, the spent cartridge. This completes the first part of the game. Now load in Part Two.

This section is where you gather information and statements from other characters in the game. The input is nearly the same as Infograme's first game, Vera Cruz, where you only input certain names or words to get the answers. There are seven main characters in this section. Here are their names and addresses:

1. Mrs Marianne Sidney (Wife), Sylvie Sidney (Daughter), Ludovic Sidney (Son) – **St James Square, Clermont.**
2. Peggy Gachet (Servant of House Keeper), Henri Lajoie (Caretaker) – **St James Square, Clermont.**
3. Robert Renard (Tino di Nallo) – **336 Blatin Street, Clermont Dores Square, Cournon.**
4. Hubert Decol (Patrick Languille) – **Jade Place, Clermont Hotel Gevaudan St Chely.**

There are four options you can choose to gather information. They are:

S Statement, E Examination, M Message, C Comparison. There is also option A. Use this to make the Arrest.

There now follows the complete solution to the second part. Type in the option then press return, then type the second part and press return and then the third part and return. Do not type the words in brackets.

E: AUTOPSY SIDNEY
E: BALLISTICS
S: WITNESS (JEANNOT)
S: MRS SIDNEY: JAMES (MARIANNE)
S: DECOL: JADE
S: MARIANNE: JAMES
S: DECOL: JADE
S: SIDNEYS CARETAKER: JAMES (LAJOIE)
S: SIDNEYS SERVANT: JAMES (PEGGY)
S: SIDNEYS SON: JAMES (LUDOVIC)
S: SIDNEYS DAUGHTER: JAMES (SYLVIE)
S: LAJOIE: JAMES
S: RENARD: BLATIN
S: MARIANNE: JAMES
S: SYLVIE: JAMES
S: MARIANNE: JAMES
S: NALLO: DORES
S: LUDOVIC: JAMES
S: NALLO: DORES
S: LUDOVIC: JAMES
S: NALLO: DORES
M: GIE LYON: SERGEANT
M: CIAT CLERMONT: LANGUILLE
M: BDRJ CLERMONT: LANGUILLE
M: DG: PATRICK LANGUILLE
S: LANGUILLE: CHELY
C: LANGUILLE
S: JEANNOT: REPUBLIC
E: BALLISTICS
S: LANGUILLE: CHELY
S: NALLO: DORES
C: LANGUILLE
C: NALLO
S: NALLO: DORES
S: LANGUILLE: CHELY
C: NALLO
C: LANGUILLE
S: NALLO: DORES
S: LANGUILLE: CHELY
S: NALLO: DORES
S: LANGUILLE: CHELY
A: guess who?

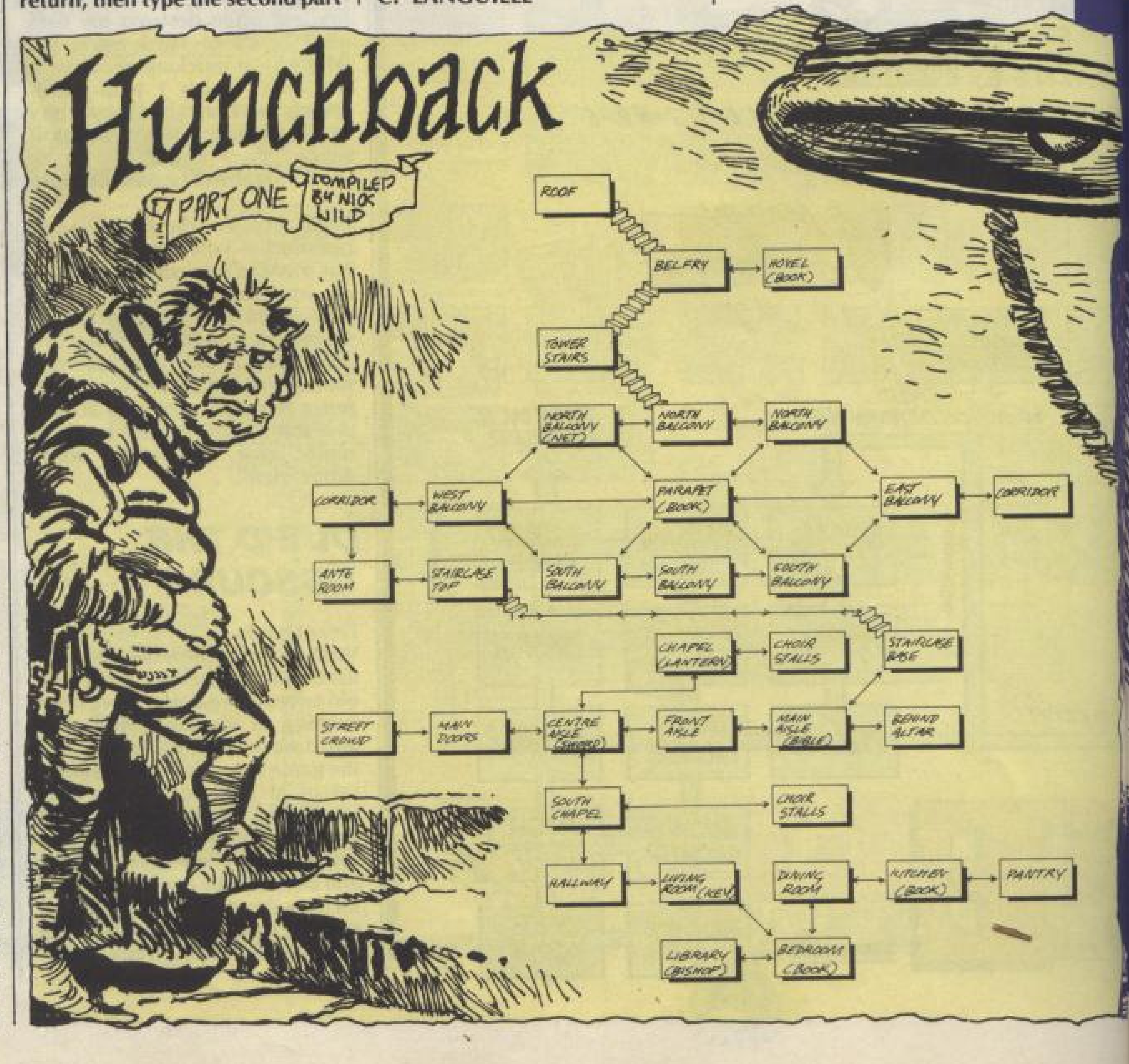
You will then receive the following message: 'The author congratulates you on solving this mystery. You showed perseverence, intelligence, and an ability for police work in clearing up 'The Sidney Affair'. You will now be promoted – ready for your next case.'

And that is that. Altogether a game I very much enjoyed. I can't wait for the next one, *Murder On the Atlantic*.

A Archer, Middlesex

You do indeed show some aptitude for police work with this solution, a job which earns you this month's £20 worth of software.

DB







PRICE OF MAGICK

Dear Derek,
I am writing to give you some help on the *Price of Magik*. I have gone quite a way into this game and have found a good few spells, 16 in all, and the objects to go with them, these are:

1. MAD – grimoire
2. FLY – broom
3. FIN – silver mail
4. SAN – claw
5. DOW – pendulum
6. BOM – trumpet
7. IBM – blue Box
8. FIX – valerian Plant
9. SEE – feldspar lens
10. HYP – Staff
11. ZEN – little mirror
12. KIL – axe
13. ZAP – ashes
14. DET – elder cross
15. SPY – hi!
16. XAM – prism

To get the silver mail for the Fin spell give the robes to the Golem. To get the claw for the San spell cast Bom at the dark spawn picture. The pendulum for the Dow spell is found in the clock. To get the trumpet for the Bom spell cast Bom at cherub. The blue box for the Ibm spell can be found in stonehenge, to get there cast the Bom spell at the stonehenge picture. To get the feldspar lens for the See spell pull or cut curtain. To get the staff for the Hyp spell cut vine. To get the little mirror

DEREK BREWSTER'S

Adventure Trail EXTRA

for the Zen spell, cut the mirror with diamond, the diamond being in the ring which is on the knucklebone. To get the prism for the Xam spell go into the room that was made from cutting the mirror. To get the axe for the Kil spell it's quite simple as it lands on your head in one of the rooms taking 50 strength points. To get the ashes for the Zap spell, burn the woodpile.

That's how to get the stuff for the spells, now here's some help on the other aspects of the game.

To get the armour from the ghost, bury the skull bones and knucklebone (remove ring first) with the spade. To safely get the talisman, cast Fly at weight by rubbing the talisman you get transported to a new section of locations. Casting the Zen spell will bring you to the mists of time. Here you can enter different locations much quicker. When you are in the misty room or corridor, cast the See spell and to get the wheel in this room cast Hyp at the bat saying 'take wheel' to it. To read the inscription on the ceiling, cast Fly at yourself. To be able to stay down on the river bed, cast Fin at yourself but remember to take all your stuff again afterwards because you drop it.

That's all the help, now can anyone help me.

1. How do you get past the stone door?
2. What is the answer to the riddle? You said a few months ago that it was fear. I typed this in but nothing happened.
3. Is there anyway of getting past the dark dead-end where there's a feeling of magic?
4. Is there anyway of opening the sarcophagus in the room with the mummy?

Eamon Scanlon, London

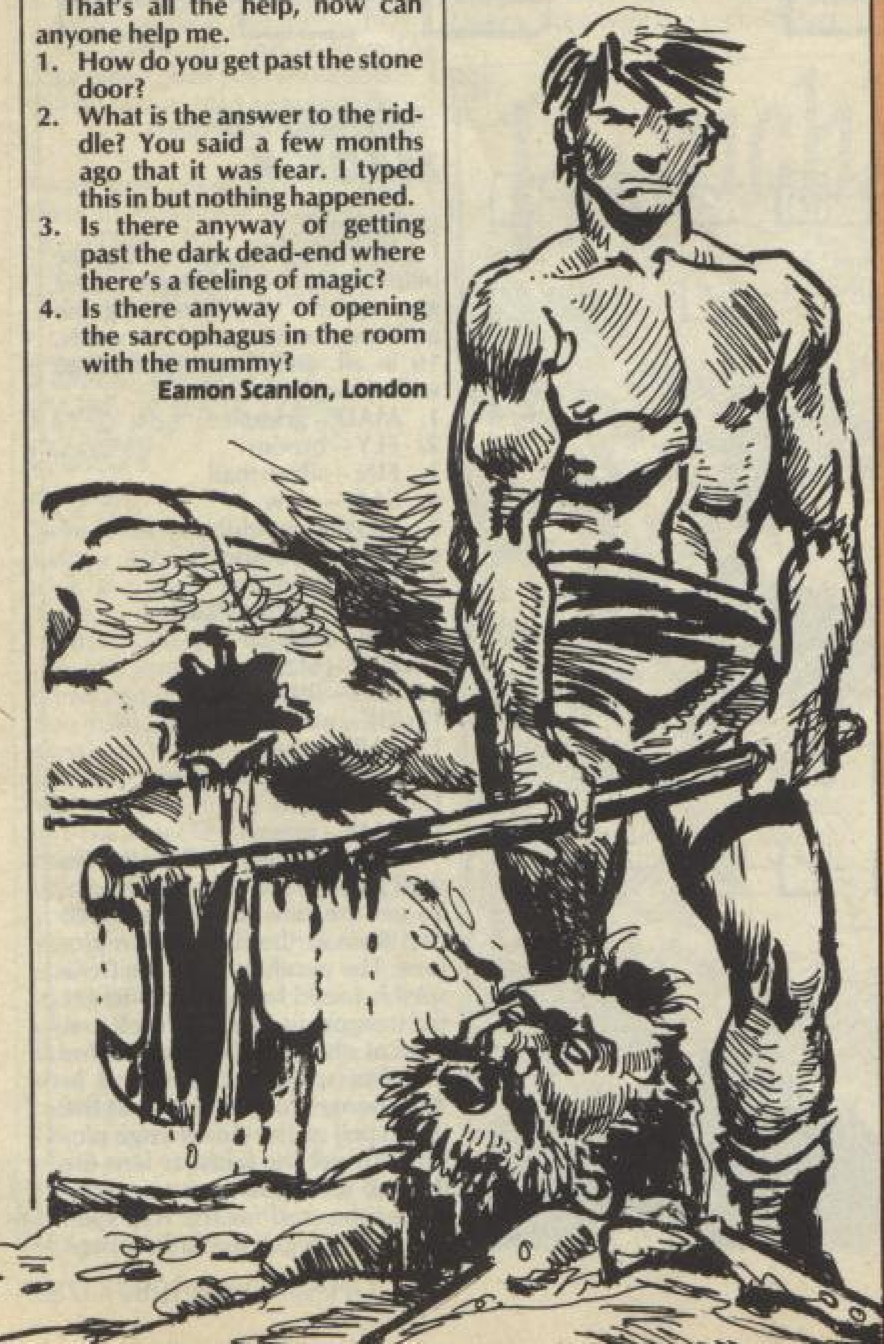
SUPERHERO

Can I claim to be a **SUPERHERO**? I finished *Matt Lucas Private Investigator* at 6.10pm on April 2nd. The final screen describes John Harpinger thanking Matt for finding him, and Matt saying 'It's okay, I needed someone to fix my car.'

The following is a complete solution, but there are a few things more which need to be done as my score was only 120 out of 160. Anyway, here goes.

From your starting point on the jetty go North to the car. I used this location to bring my spare objects to, because it's near the boat (which you will need later). Go North, North and you see Harpinger's house to the West. Go North, North, and West into the precinct where, on entering, you receive a phone call. Go West to your office and OPEN DRAWER, TAKE HAIRPIN, and go East, North, to Phil's office. Hit . . . er, right, I think that's quite enough for now.

Well done **R S Cole** of Nottingham who is June's Superhero, and many thanks for the full solution which will be of help to all Trail readers.



1987 PBM MAILBOX



Guess what? PBM MAILBOX celebrates its first birthday this month – it's survived 12 issues with only one libellous article, so I'm sure you're not surprised to see me still here. Well, I *hope* you're not . . . anyway, after a year of in-depth PBMing, perhaps it's time to pay a visit back to basics for a recap of the play-by-mail hobby and how to get into it.

PBM?

PLAY-BY-MAIL games are multiplayer strategy and/or fantasy games played through the post.

Each PBM game is run by a central body, the 'Game Moderator' (GM). The number of players varies from game to game; to each player the GM posts a 'turnsheet' or 'print-out' showing his or her individual position and situation in the game, plus the results of the player's last actions.

The player interprets this information and plots his plans (or plans his plots?) for the future, filling in an 'orders form' to tell the GM what he wants to do that turn.

This orders form is returned to the GM by post; the GM then carries out the orders in the game itself, by hand or on a computer. The results of these orders are determined by the scenario within the game, including the other players' orders – and the results are then posted back to the players on their turnsheets. Thus the game continues . . .

DIPPY PLAY

THERE'S ANOTHER important factor in PBM gaming: DIPLOMACY. Diplomacy is the interaction of players outside the game environment to improve each player's position. It can include trade between players, treaties, declarations of war (which should be made for a good reason . . .), and the strategic placing of disinformation to confuse an enemy! There are many opportunities to develop play through diplomatic communications; it's up to you, the player, to recognise and exploit them.

THE GAMES

THERE ARE MANY genres of PBM game: fantasy, sci-fi, strategy, role-playing (RPG), historical . . . and mixtures of the lot. You could be the captain of a starship, a power-crazed tyrant, a tribal leader or even a mythical character – the choice is yours.

In CRASH I try to mention as many different games as possible (though I tend to stay close to computer-moderated games rather than their human-processed counterparts – this *is* a computer mag, after all . . .), so if you flick through this section or the specialist PBM mags (listed below) you'll soon see what's on offer.

The concept of PBM gaming is enthralling. Over the past year, many PBM companies have reported a great influx of new players into the hobby. This is a good thing, and as long as the new players learn and respect the established traditions (no *'I'm bored of this game, I'll take somebody out with me'* tactics, please!) PBMing will have a bright future.

QUESTION TIME

Many of the letters I receive are asking the same questions, so here's a selection of common queries – with a few answers, naturally

HOW OFTEN MUST A TURN BE COMPLETED?

This depends on which game you're playing in. Some games have an orders deadline: if your orders don't reach the GM by that date, then the round will be made without you. The most common turnaround rate is fortnightly, though there are quicker games for eager PBMers and slower ones for players living abroad, whose orders take longer in the post.

On the other hand, some games operate a real-time environment by having open deadlines; you can send them orders as often or as rarely as you like, and the game progresses daily.

HOW MUCH DO GAMES COST?

Prices vary greatly. There's usually a fee around £5 to join a game, which may include your start-up pack and a few turns. After you've used these freebies, you must pay for each turn; prices vary from below £1 to above £5 a turn. The norm is about £1.50, so a game running fortnightly deadlines could cost just 75p a week plus postage – small price for a lot of pleasure.

HOW DO GAMES END?

Good question! Again, it varies. Some games just go on and on and on. You simply stop playing when you tire of the game, when the GM tires of you (!), or when the GM tires of everything and decides to set up a profitable business, like recycling postage stamps. Other games operate a points system, and once a player hits a set (but secret) score, *ba-bing*, the game ends. Most games work this way.

WHAT DO I GET FOR MY MONEY?

or, How long is a printout?

In general, you get a great deal for your money once the game begins to develop (when you start in a new game, it takes a few turns for the game to mature and become more interesting than confusing). Some companies offer reams of detail. Anyway, I doubt you'll be disappointed – if you are, write in and tell me! And when you come to make your orders, it's never just a simple case of 'GET TORCH' or 'GO WEST' – I've known order forms to take the best part of an evening to complete properly!

I LIVE OUTSIDE THE UK

... can I still play British games?

Yes! Every PBM company I know of offers slow-turnaround games for players from the Continent, Africa, Asia, America and the other places. Write to the companies to find out. And there are many ways of sending money abroad, so just call in at a local bank and ask for details.

Incidentally, I know of some players on the Continent who play mainly to improve their English. And some British players, now I think about it ...

ARE THERE SPECIALIST PBM MAGS?

Yes, three ...

PBM Magazine, Emjay, *17 Langbank Avenue, Rise Park, Nottingham NG5 5BU* (£1.25)

Flagship, *PO Box 12, Aldridge, Walsall, West Midlands WS9 0TJ* (£1.75)

First Post, KG Pack, *Walnut Tree Lodge, 9 Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire NN9 8JE* (£1)

But don't forget to read PBM MAILBOX every month as well!

WILL THEY EVER

improve that drawing of you, Brendon?

I don't know. I hope so; it makes me look like a cross between Spock and an old Action Man. I can hardly *recognise* my stunning profile in that sketch, though it isn't my good side ...

PBM FORUM

This hasn't been a very good month for me: first I crash my car into a bolting cow (an interesting experience; and no – it did not sound its horns. Nor did it *mooooove* over. I have heard ALL the jokes.) Then I find I've received only half the normal amount of mail (just three sacks this time). But as I see it, we have two options. Either you ALL write letters to me, or I get no post. Sound fair? Good. Enough of this rambling, on with the letters ...

MOAN MOAN

Dear Brendon
With regard to the PBM Awards, I believe next year's awards should include a Biggest Pain In The Neck trophy. Conquest Games should get this award for changing the rules three times in as many months. It's so frustrating!

Roy Pollard, Stapleford, Nottingham

My only comment is this: have the rule alterations improved the game's reality and fairness?

BK

SNIFF SNIFF

Dear Brendon
I'm sure you have full knowledge of KJC's action against *Arcadia* and the company who ran it, Jade Games. I had been playing *Arcadia* for some time and I thoroughly enjoyed the game. I had never even considered playing *Earthwood* (the game whose copyright *Arcadia* supposedly breaches), so KJC have not lost any business from me!

To deprive me of my favourite entertainment in such a way earns my utter condemnation. After all, *Arcadia* is not a new game – many people have been playing it for months and, at the time of closing, had well-developed characters.

In the light of what KJC have done, I will never consider playing any of their future games (old or new).

Draug-Dur, Arcadia 13

You're not very impressed with KJC – do any Earthwood players wish to comment?

BK

SLOTH SLOTH

Dear Brendon
Could you please tell the guy who runs Sloth Enterprises that he has paid in my cheque but has not sent me my startup pack! People have been hassling me to join the game for ages; so now I join and nothing happens!

Talking of *Saturnalia*, it would seem that J Cottrell is right – if the game is so boring and mediocre, why does everybody seem to love it?

Char De Bell, Watford Hertfordshire

Consider them told. As for your final comment, well, all I can say is 'ooops' again. Mutter, mutter. (By the way, yes – the notelets are ... different. 'Cute' is not a term I like to use. Too Yank!)

BK

That's the best I could come up with this month. So come on now, put pen to paper and send me some juicy gossip and/or news. The address is: PBM FORUM, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*

By the way, does anybody want to buy a used Triumph Spitfire? Going cheap ...

HEAVY ON THE FACTIONS

IN THE PAST couple of months I've received several letters telling me about a new(ish) fantasy/RPG game called *Faction Magician*. I was somewhat sceptical of this wondrous game till there arrived in my mailbag a letter and startup package from Steve Newton (of Newty Games). I'll save you all my boring waffle – the letter read:

Dear Brendon
A long time ago in a land ... Once upon a tim ... Quite some time ago ... Well, about ten months ago, CRASH and MICRONET organised a competition to design a multiuser game for a computer, along the lines of MUD. I gave it a go, and was fortunate enough to be one of the runners-up – which wasn't bad for a first attempt.

Anyway, the point of all this is that I went on to develop the idea into a PBM game, details of which I enclose. The game was launched on a national basis in January, and despite (or because of?) being offered sleeping room on Mike McGarry's floor, I wasn't able to attend the convention.

As you will see, the game is hand-moderated and is based in the far future, when we're recovering from having blown ourselves back to the Stone Age, though the history of the time doesn't see it like that, of course ...

The game is quite large in scope – over 60,000 different locations in the known world alone, 200-plus settlements ranging from villages to cities, and four distinct types of monster, leading to more than 100 types in all.

The object of the game is to rise through the ranks of the magicians' hierarchy while advancing the cause of your faction (in fact, each complements the other). However, things are not that simple.

Like all hierarchies, the higher means the fewer, and players may find it necessary to 'take out' a rival in the higher status groups. Added to this are the difficulties of members of the other factions trying to do this to you; poisoning (very rarely), plague and the occasional Hill Dwarf trying to rape your horse (they supply their own stepladders!). As you can understand, life is seldom dull ...

And so the letter continues. The startup package contains a very clear rule book, a few pretty pictures, a map of the land of Trinovia, and a blank turnsheet.

As you may have gathered, you play the role of a magician, a

follower of one of the land's seven or so gods. There are all sorts of hierarchies and things to progress through – plenty for any RPG fan.
If you'd like further details, send an SAE to:

Newty Games, *Railway Cottage, Pennance Road, Pennance, Lanner, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 5TF*

Don't forget to mention CRASH! Startups for CRASH readers cost £5 (including three free turns), and turns cost £1.60 thereafter.

MAIL-BOXING

THE Pro-Box Club appears to have done the impossible: PBM boxing.
The PBMer roleplays as a boxer over a ten/twelve-month period. The aim of the game is to be the most successful boxer in the game when the last round is called. Different!
Turnaround is fortnightly and each turn costs £1. For further details send an SAE to:

Pro-Box Club, *32 Greenford Gardens, Greenford, Middlesex*

SOCCER STUNNER

KICK-ABOUT is yet another PBM soccer game. But unlike other soccer games (and I receive news of SO many), *Kick-About* has a startup package which is professionally presented, with a well-collated and understandable rulebook and a copy of the *Kick-About* fanzine
It's a game of team management: each league is split into four divisions, with ten teams in a division. Against the other teams of his league the player pits his wits, imagination and whatever else you pit in the game. And there are cash prizes.
This is one of the best soccer versions I've seen, though I don't like the sport. I haven't tried *Kick-About*, but I *was* tempted . . .
Startup costs £5, and turn fees are 50p a session; there are ten sessions each season. So £9 will cover startup and a whole season.
For further details, send an SAE to:

Phil Shulkind, *58 Hampstead Road, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3AH*

(Note that Phil is a very successful and well-known PBM player; he's not likely to try any funny business.)

LUDLOW DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY SHROPSHIRE

PBM MAILBOX: DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY
June is here at last, but don't let her distract you too much . . . Just remember – be careful out there, and keep in touch through the DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY . . .

★001 Adrian Neal
48 Marketstead Estate, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 1SL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 & 78; Capitol 15; Earthwood 52; Arcadia 6; Star Empires 1; Conquest*

★002 Jason French
78 Princes Road, Ellacombe, Torquay TQ1 1PA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander BLITAD)*

★003 Travis Smith
27 Sharmon Crescent, Braunstone Frith, Leicester LE3 6NW.
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Belle Julie)*

★004 Robert Darbyshire
22 Thornton Gate; Clevleys, Lancs, FY5 1JN
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 1 (Death Warriors); It's A Crime! 4 (Megacity Blues)*

★005 Stuart Millinship
17 Graveney Gardens, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6QW
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander SHUTUN)*

★006 Mr G G Manganoni
109 Kings Road, Farncombe, Surrey GU7 3UE
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Crasimoff's World; Explorers of Orion; Lands of the Crimson Sun; Aes; Mark of Chaos; Untamed Land; Vesuvian*

★007 Mr C J McCarthy
39A Seaview Road, Liscard, Wallesey, Merseyside L45 4QN
GAMES: *Starglobe 1; Star Empires 1; Vorcon Wars 19; Saturnalia; Fleet Manoeuvres P107*

★008 Scott Macfarlane
2 Broomside Terrace, Costorphine, Edinburgh EH12 7LZ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60; Super Vorcon Wars 77*

★009 Paul Davidson
51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Commander PEPISH); Arcadia; Conquest*

★010 Kev Wasey
9 Clarkson House, Maysoule Road, Battersea, London SW11 2BP
GAMES: *Earthwood 30*

★011 Ian Hudson
53 Deepmore Close, Alrewas, Nr Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 65 (Commander PESTIB); Super Vorcon Wars 77 (Commander FRUGAD); World of Vengeance (Ian's Invincibles nr Bury St Edmunds)*

★012 Gareth Evans
4 Whitelands Road, Thatcham, Newbury, Berkshire RG13 4AR
GAMES: *Arcadia 6 (Egg Groinside)*

★013 Mike Adams
774 Holmefield Road, Liverpool, Merseyside LK9 3PQ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars; Conquest; It's A Crime! 4 (Priests)*

★014 David Lane
23 Florence Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham N92 5HR
GAMES: *Casus Belli 5; Player 16*

★015 Martin Higgins
Wallesey Road, Wallesey, Merseyside L44 2AG
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72; It's A Crime! 4*

★016 Cliff Frost
175 Queens Road, Leicester LE2 3FN
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Arcadia; Earthwood 44; Kings of Steel 17; Arcadia; It's A Crime!; Swords and Shields*

★017 Robin van den Yssel
Smaragdlaan 172, 2332 BX Leideh, Zuid Holland, Netherlands
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 (Commander TREBIN); Starglobe 3 (The Dutchman)*

★018 P Brunstan
Cae Mari Pwn House, Thomastown, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 2 (Death)*

★019 Steve Vickers
26 Swinton Court, Harrogate HG2 0BB
GAMES: *Soccer Star; Saturnalia; It's A Crime! 4; World of Chaos*

★020 Barnaby Dellar
11 Priory Grove, Stockwell, London SW8 2PD
GAMES: *Starglobe 4*

★021 Stephen Holt
27 Rosemary Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8ER
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 61 (Commander BRIDER); It's A Crime! 4 (Fighting Uruk-Hai)*

★022 Kevin Pack
Walnut Tree Lodge, 9 Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire NN9 8JE
GAMES: *Earthwood; Saturnalia; Starglobe 4; Orion's Finger; It's A Crime! 3; Casus Belli; Aes*

★023 Matthew Hanson
10 Denby Lane Crescent, Grange Moor, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4EB
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Obsidian Fox); Arcadia*

★024 Gavin Marshall
36 Spur Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 0QL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 71*

★025 Owen Whitehead
213 Park Road, Barnsley, S70 1QW
GAMES: *Aes ('Rillion' – E Side), Saturnalia (Grendl of the Web), Enchirodon (Brothers in Arms), It's A Crime (Brothers in Arms), From The Mouth of Hell (Elf), World of Chaos (Rillion Kerr), Soccer Star (Morning Star RS League)*

★026 Damian Manning
12 Warden Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5SB
GAMES: *Starglobe (SS Alvon), It's A Crime (Merry Mob)*

★027 John Preen
12 Underdale Avenue, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 5DY
GAMES: *Starglobe Four (SS Broadsword of the Guild Alliance), Vorcon Wars 78 (Plonog)*

★028 John Kemp
9 Wold View, Caistor, Lincoln, LN7 6UU.
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (New York Assassins), Arcadia 8 (Lord Centaurus at Jihad City, P27)*

★029 Milan Petronic
24 Dell Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 2HZ
GAME: *Arcadia 13 (Draug Dur)*

★030 JC Fowler
11 Beaconsfield Place, St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 0SZ
GAMES: *Starglobe Three, Arcadia 8*

★031 Kevin Edwards
52 Woodlands Road, Irchester, Northants NN9 7BU
GAMES: *Vorcon 60, It's A Crime! 4, City of Strife.*

★032 Jason Cottrell
17 Back Lane, Barrington, Cambs, CB2 5RF
GAMES: *Saturnalia (Axil Taranus), Tyranny (P5)*

★033 Michael R Stannard
44 Harrington Street, Cleethorpes, South Humberside, DN35 7AZ
GAMES: *Arcadia 10 (Mordran the Unknown at Seven Springs City)*

★034Malcolm Sums
76 Mount Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YF
GAMES: *Soccer Star (Kilmore Oilers), Bradley's Football (Houston Oilers)*

★035 Paul Davidson
51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland, KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Pepish), Arcadia 7 (Ped at Moriquendi City), Conquest (Anar Narion, maps 18/19)*

★036 S Davies
16 Clara Street, Ton-Pentre, Rhondda, Mid Glam, S. Wales, CF41 7HQ
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (gang 315), Vorcon Wars 64 (Chotub)*

★037 S Wyatt
60 St Andrews Road, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 9JJ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 73 (Prifun), Vorcon Wars 78 (Sathal), It's A Crime! 4 (Mercenaries), Kings of Steel (Woodland Alliance)*

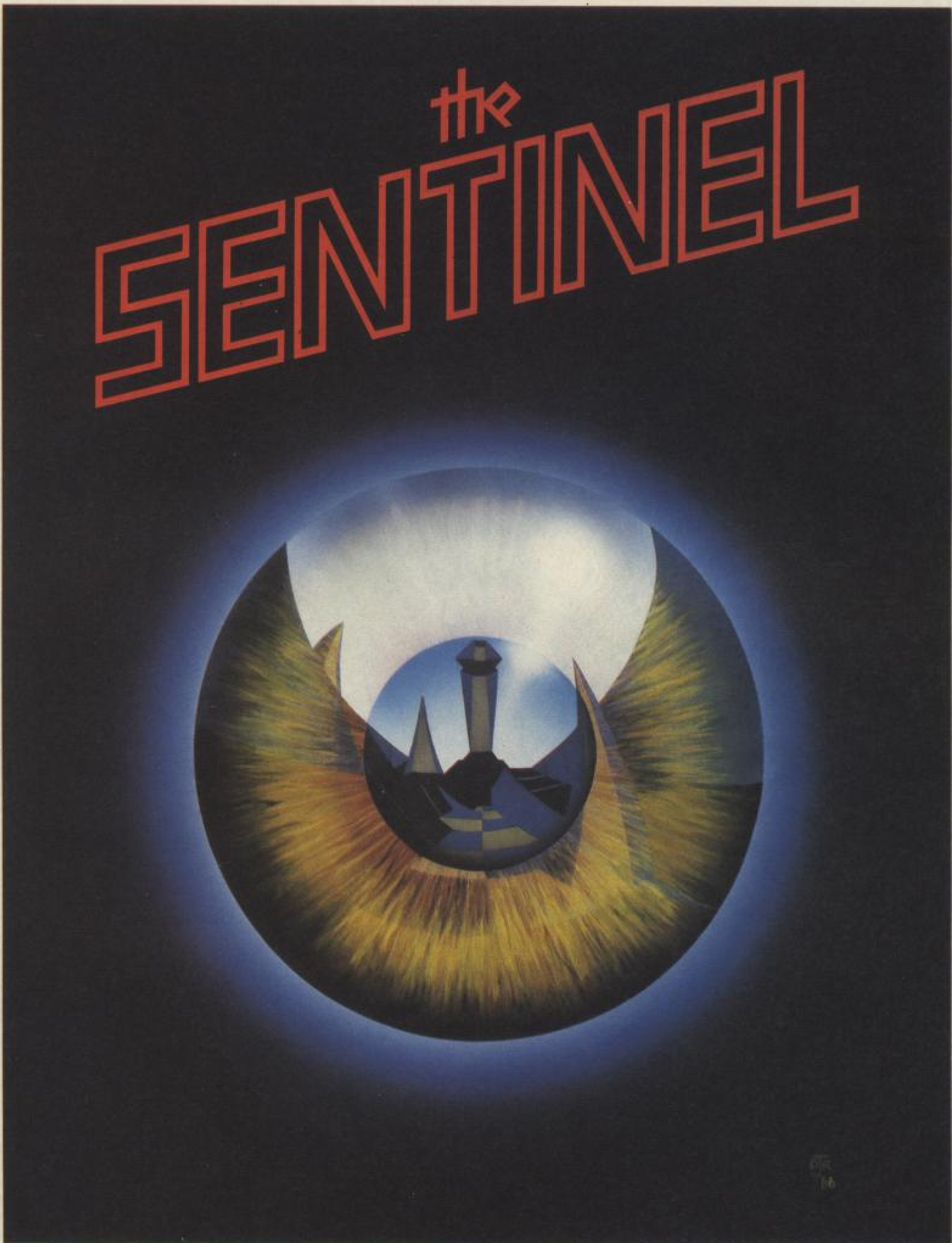
★038 Richard Goff
20 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU
GAME: *Arcadia 12 (player 17)*

★039 Jason Huggins
35 Garratts Lane, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 2ED
GAME: *Saturnalia (Vetrex)*

So ends another Diplomatic Directory – don't forget to send your applications to our chief Diplomat at:
PBM DIRECTORY, BRENDON KAVANAGH, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB

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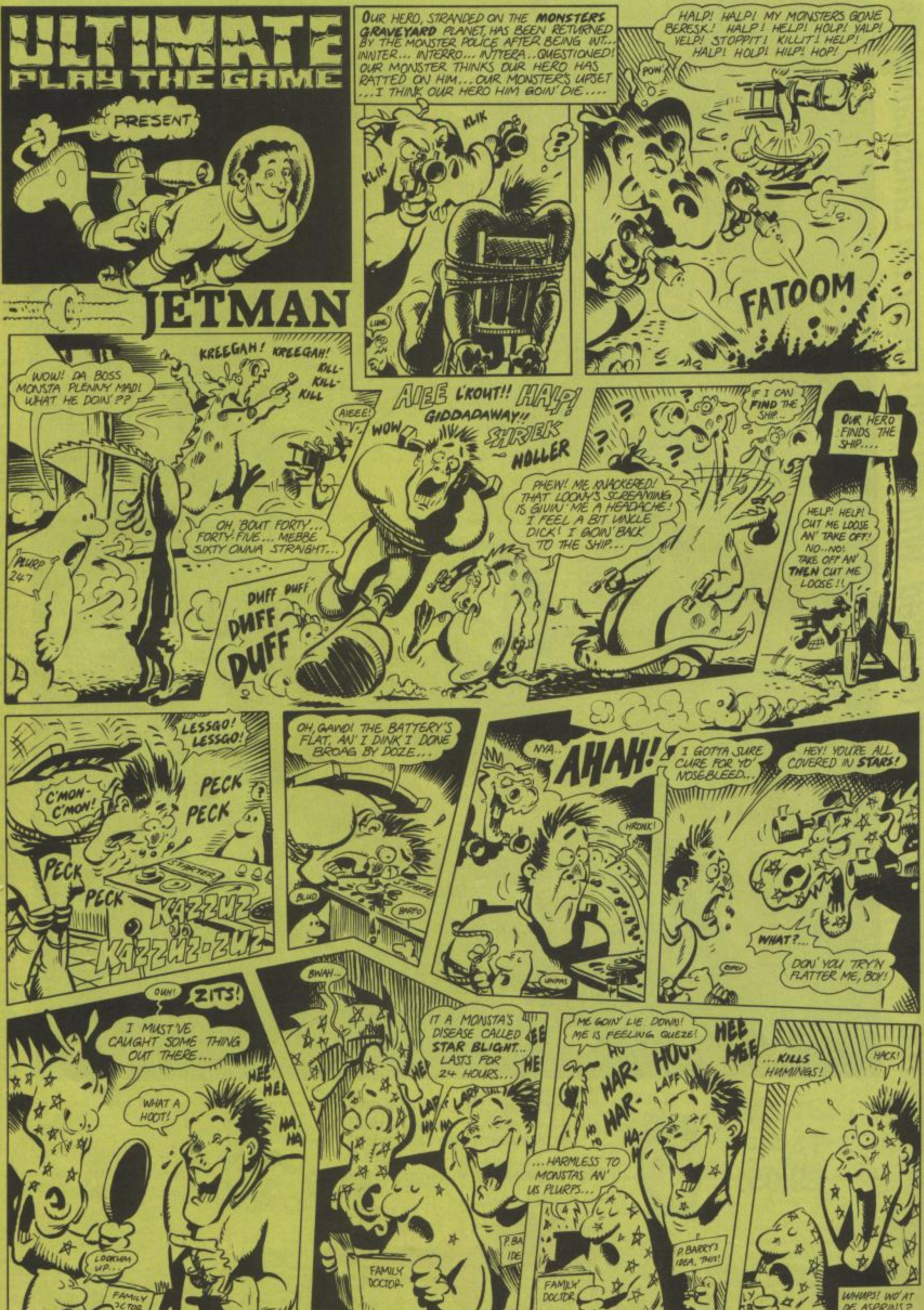
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OUR HERO, STRANDED ON THE MONSTERS GRAVEYARD PLANET, HAS BEEN RETURNED BY THE MONSTER POLICE AFTER BEING INT... INNTER... INTERRO... INTTERA.. QUESTIONED! OUR MONSTER THINKS OUR HERO HAS RATTED ON HIM... OUR MONSTER'S UPSET ...I THINK OUR HERO HIM GOIN' DIE....
KLIK
KLIK
?
HALP! HALP! MY MONSTERS GONE BERESK! HALP! HELP! HOLP! YALP! YELP! STOPPIT! KILLIT! HELP! HALP! HOLP! HILP! HOP!
POW
FATOOM
WOW! DA BOSS MONSTA PLENNY MAD! WHAT HE DOIN'??
KREEGAH! KREEGAH!
KILL-KILL-KILL
AIEEE!
OH, 'BOUT FORTY... FORTY-FIVE... MEBBE SIXTY ONNA STRAIGHT...
PLURP 247
AIEE L'KOUT!! HALP!
GIDDADAWAY!!
WOW
SHRIEK
HOLLER
DUFF DUFF
DUFF
DUFF
PHEW! ME KNACKERED! THAT LOONY'S SCREAMING IS GIVIN' ME A HEADACHE! I FEEL A BIT UNCLE DICK! I GOIN' BACK TO THE SHIP...
IF I CAN FIND THE SHIP...
OUR HERO FINDS THE SHIP....
HELP! HELP! CUT ME LOOSE AN' TAKE OFF! NO..NO! TAKE OFF AN' THEN CUT ME LOOSE!!
LESSGO! LESSGO!
C'MON-C'MON!
PECK
PECK
PECK
PECK
KAZZHZ
KAZZHZ-ZUZ
OH, GAWD! THE BATTERY'S FLAT, AN' I DINK I DONE BROAG BY DOZE...
BLUD
BARFO
NYA..
AHAH!
HRONK!
I GOTTA SURE CURE FOR YO' NOSEBLEED...
HEY! YOU'RE ALL COVERED IN STARS!
WHAT?...
DON' YOU TRY'N FLATTER ME, BOY!
OUH!
ZITS!
I MUST'VE CAUGHT SOME THING OUT THERE...
WHAT A HOOT!
HEE HEE
HA HA
LOOKUM UP...
BWAH...
IT A MONSTA'S DISEASE CALLED STAR BLIGHT... LASTS FOR 24 HOURS...
FAMILY DOCTOR
ME GOIN' LIE DOWN! ME IS FEELING QUEZE!
HEE HEE
HAR-HAR-
HOO!
LAFF
...HARMLESS TO MONSTAS AN' US PLURPS...
P.BARRY'S IDEA, THIS!
FAMILY DOCTOR
...KILLS HUMINGS!
HACK!
WHUPS! WO'AT DE ASPRINS?

THERE'S US GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS!

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And you can get any of these fab games at ridiculously cheap prices!

(Gawsh! Well, I'll be a cott'n pick'n hornswoggler!)

Home, home on the range . . . Yes siree Bob, them there folks at the US Gold ranch are so doggone gen-er-ous! Yeeehar! The team from Brum (a small township not 40 miles from the CRASH corral) are offering eight of their classic golden nuggets of games at specially reduced prices for CRASH readers. Not only that, but as an extra special treat you can grab *Bounty Bob*, one of the most root'n toot'n addictive platform games in the West, at a stupendously low price. If y'all want to get into the US Gold rush then take a look at the games on offer and take yer pick. Well, give me a home on the range where the buffalo roam and the deer and the antelope play, and the sky is not cloudy all day . . .



FULL REVIEWS
To check up on all the lowdown on the games on offer see the full reviews . . .
IMPOSSIBLE MISSION Issue 22 Page 88
SPY HUNTER Issue 16 Page 120
TAPPER Issue 17 Page 20
RAID OVER MOSCOW Issue 15 Page 114
BOUNTY BOB Issue 21 Page 28
POLE POSITION Issue 12 Page 81
ZORRO Issue 26 Page 32
KUNG FU MASTER Issue 31 Page 16

POLE POSITION
The official Atari racing game, lovingly converted onto the ZX Spectrum. Race off into the distance with other cars proving tough opposition.

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION
It's an all-action adventure against the clock! Can you help save the world by collecting code words scattered throughout an underground complex?

KUNG FU MASTER
Another arcade game for your Spectrum. Kung Fu Master is a horizontally scrolling beat 'em up with many opponents taking you through five levels of Ninja action.

GOONIES
A strangely addictive series of puzzle games designed to baffle your brains as you attempt to help the intrepid explorers escape.

BOUNTY BOB
Not exactly the first platform game, but certainly one of the best, and an all-time classic, Bounty Bob received a rave review in CRASH.

SPY HUNTER
Still a favourite amongst the CRASH team, Spy Hunter earned itself a Smash way back in Issue 16. It's a highly addictive road racing game, with a quick jaunt on the river too.

TAPPER
Lloyd Mangram's favourite game! Tapper puts you in charge of several bars with the task of serving hordes of thirsty customers. As you progress the action hots up, with more and more people to get to grips with.

RAID OVER MOSCOW
Another Smash which joined US Gold's growing collection in April 1985. Six sections of arcade action that take you all the way to Moscow. 'Raid is absorbing, addictive and fun to play!'

ZORRO
The evil Colonel Garcia has captured your fair maiden and you just have to rescue her. There are screens full of platform fun, with plenty of sword fighting thrown in to match the excitement of the series.

CRASH/US GOLD READERS' OFFER

Dear Aggie,
There's no doubt about it – you've done it again! Once again, I just can't believe my luck. I would *LOVE* to have ALL these games to add to my collection. However, being realistic, I've ticked some of the boxes, and I've filled in my name and address, AND made my cheque/postal order payable to NEWSFIELD LTD. Aren't I good?

Please tick the game boxes of your choice, and then an appropriate Option Box as well.

- ☐ POLE POSITION
- ☐ IMPOSSIBLE MISSION
- ☐ KUNG FU MASTER
- ☐ GOONIES
- ☐ SPY HUNTER
- ☐ TAPPER
- ☐ ZORRO
- ☐ RAID OVER MOSCOW

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- ☐ OPTION TWO: Any TWO for £8.95
- ☐ OPTION THREE: Any THREE for £12.95

- ☐ BOUNTY BOB for £2.95

I enclose £. . . . .
Name ....
Address ....
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Postcode ....

Aggie will be putting your US GOLD games in the post just as soon as she can, but please allow up to 28 days for delivery. Send your form and payment to:

CRASH/GREMLIN GRAPHICS OFFER, PO BOX 20, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

PLEASE DEBIT MY VISA/ACCESS ACCOUNT £

I wish to pay by Visa/Access (delete as applicable)

Signature Expiry Date

Please Charge My Account No:

This special offer is subject to availability and closes on the 30th of July 1987

Win a Pogo Stick plus copies of *Thing Bounces Back* and help GREMLIN GRAPHICS celebrate the launch of their wacky new platform game.

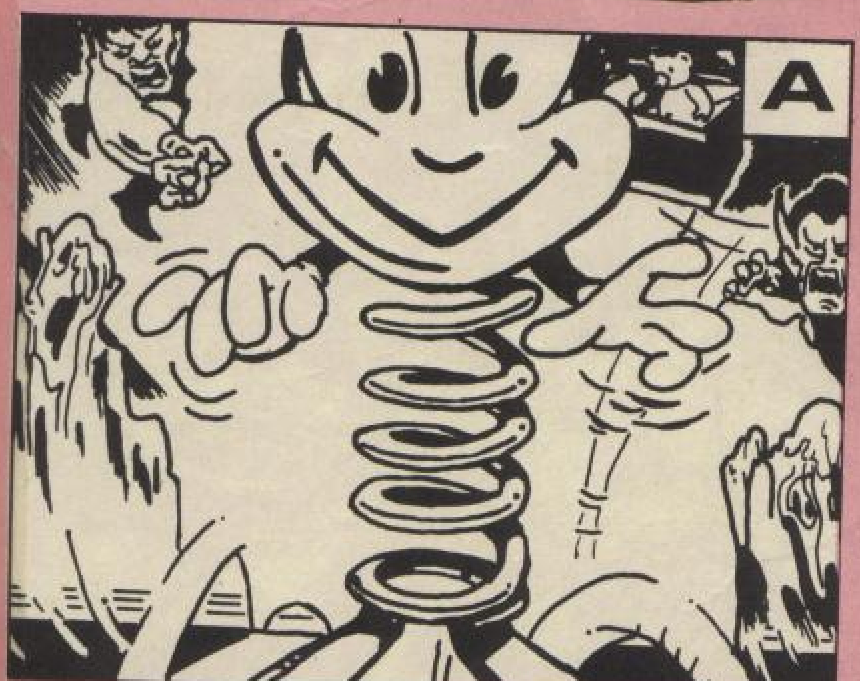


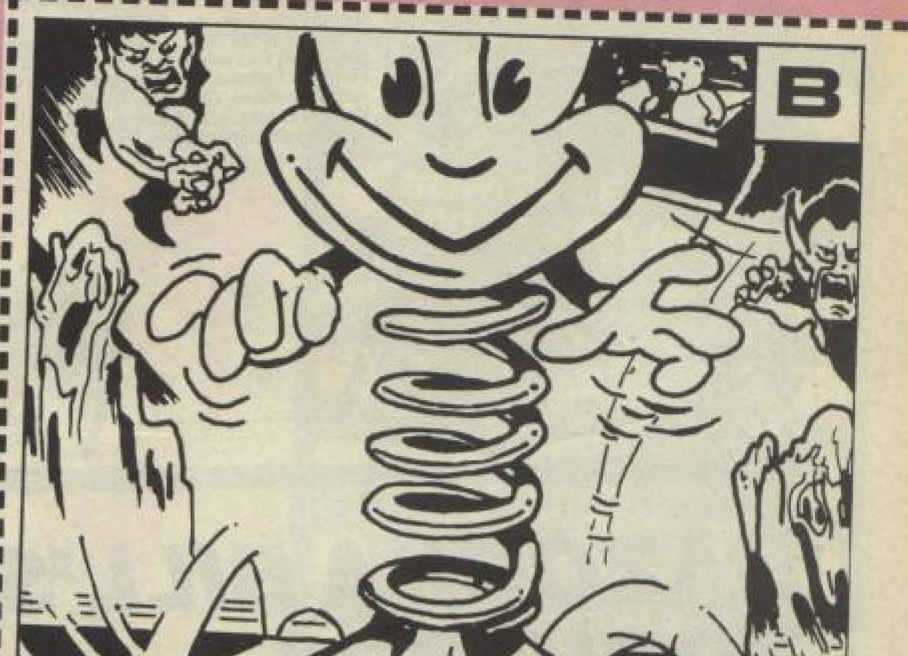
Sproing mania has struck CRASH Towers! 'It's most peculiar,' said an official Comps Minion, 'ever since the team have seen *Thing* *been leaping and bouncing around like little lambs!'*

Yes folks, for once even ageing Lloyd has joined in the fun – have you ever seen a push bike with springs?

'Wheeeeee, such fun,' said Art Maestro Oli, bouncing into view, hurriedly giving chase to a bottle of niffy orange ink that had somehow got caught up in – Ed's customised swivel chair as it, with he, bounded down the stairs.

Meanwhile Ben, Mike and Paul fight over the Space Hopper found in the attic each claiming that they found it first and so they deserve the first go. That is until the El Grosso Eddy rolls in and decides he quite fancies a go. He approaches this in his usual subtle, quiet, retiring style roaring, 'Mine! I want a go, and I want it NOW!' At which point the rest dive for cover as he leaps upon the poor





Space Hopper and bounces off in to the sunset.

Meanwhile I, your humble Comps Minion, have nothing to join in with. No-one ever spares a thought for me. (C'mon, we're talking real deep sympathy here). The only person that cares is the voluptuous Sue Quinn from Gremlin Graphics who, out of the kindness of her heart, sent me a couple of pogo sticks, and now I can be seen bouncing down Ludlow Highstreet – a regular little tourist attraction.

However, as Mummy Minion is a bit past the pogo-ing age, I've got one spare and I'm giving it away! From me to you. Because I'm so nice. And I love you. Honest.

Well, it's not going to be that easy – time to call all those dormant brain cells into action and sort out this spot the difference puzzle first.

The winner will receive a brand new Pogo stick and a copy of Thing Bounces Back, the amazingly crazy Gremlin Graphics game (see review on page 14). Copies of the game will also go off to 50 lucky runners up. Spot all ten differences in picture B, ring them, and post it off to:
BOUNCING BACK COMP, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB* to arrive no later than 25 June. Okay? Boing, sproing, bounce, bound, wheeeeeeeee!

CRASH BOUNCING BACK COMPETITION

Name ....
Address ....
....
....
Postcode ....

Crash Competition

WINNERS & PRIZES

In Issue 39 we ran four competitions. Contestants in Imagine That, the design-a-game effort for DOMARK, will have to wait a bit longer. The many entries have been sent to DOMARK for their perusal, and we eagerly await the outcome. The Ferguson/CRASH Mappers' comp doesn't close for another week yet, so more news next issue.



BUTCHER THAN BUTCH

ADVANCE were offering the winner of this competition a Ghettoblaster, a Butch Sweatshirt and headband and a copy of the game. So, the noisy and well-clothed person is **Paul Kitchener** from Bottesford, Notts NG13 0BA, while the second prize goes to **Mark Shaw** from Harwich, Essex, and third goes to **David Sallis** of Irby in the Wirral, Merseyside. 50 runners up each receive a copy of the game:

Keith Sanders, Worcestershire, DY13 8RS; Andrew Patrick, Castletown, Isle of Man; Steven Rowell, Tyne and Wear, NE38 7JS; Peter Tidmarsh, Merseyside, L11 1BW; David Windall, Kent, TN15 0DH; Tony Mallaghan, Lanarkshire, ML1 5PS; Colin Chung, Islington, London; C Johnson, Derby, DE7 2BX; D Edmundson, Lancs, BB6 8HD; Robert Cruden, Herts, CM22 6AF; Marcello Bortalino, London, N16 5BG; Darren Jones, Blackpool, Lancs; Stephen Murphy, Norwich, NR7 9DY; R J Palmer, Shropshire, SY2 5EB; Darren Martin, Hereford, HR1 1RS; J Holloway, Hants, PO4 9AA; Robert Lines, Hants, PO12 2QW; Ivor McKee, N Humberside, HU12 8BG; Richard K Caethoven, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, NE5 2HJ; Adam Lumber, Avon, BS17 4LU; J Tomkinson, Birmingham, B43 6PA; Alistair Scott, Edinburgh, EH12 7DF; David Forsythe, Foresthill, London, SE23 2JL; B Gibson, Dundee, DD5 3PL; Wayne Miller, Wallsall, WS3 3HD; Paul Bishop, W Midlands, WS10 7NF; Stuart Ives, Norfolk, NR7 9NY; Delroy McQueen, London W12; David Horton, Wolverhampton, WV6 0TQ; Richard Hall, Staffs, B77 2JP; Jude Hurley, Gwent, NP9 2DE; Wayne Davenport, Irlam, Manchester; Gary Phillips, Wolverhampton, WV11 1HE; R J Wade, Staffs, ST3 7NX; Mark Bruce, Essex, IG10 1SF; Crash Reader, Gloucestershire, GL52 6DY; Phillip Killen, Llandaff North, Cardiff; Guy Higginson, London NW3; Crash Reader (!), Watford, Herts; Mathew Buxton, Kent, DA15 9AZ; Richard Hibbert, Cheshire, SK15 3HD; Simon Firth, Lincoln, LN6 8SP; Colin Prkes, N Ireland, BT39 9HF; R Cattan, Cheshire, WA1 4LW; Russell M Judd, Ilford, Essex; Matthew Holland, S Glamorgan, CF6 1QE; James Griffiths, Cheshire, WA13 0AY; Haroon Siddique, Middlesex, TW3 2NU; Peter Taylor, Shropshire, SY10 7LG.



BAZOOKA BILL'S TROUSERS

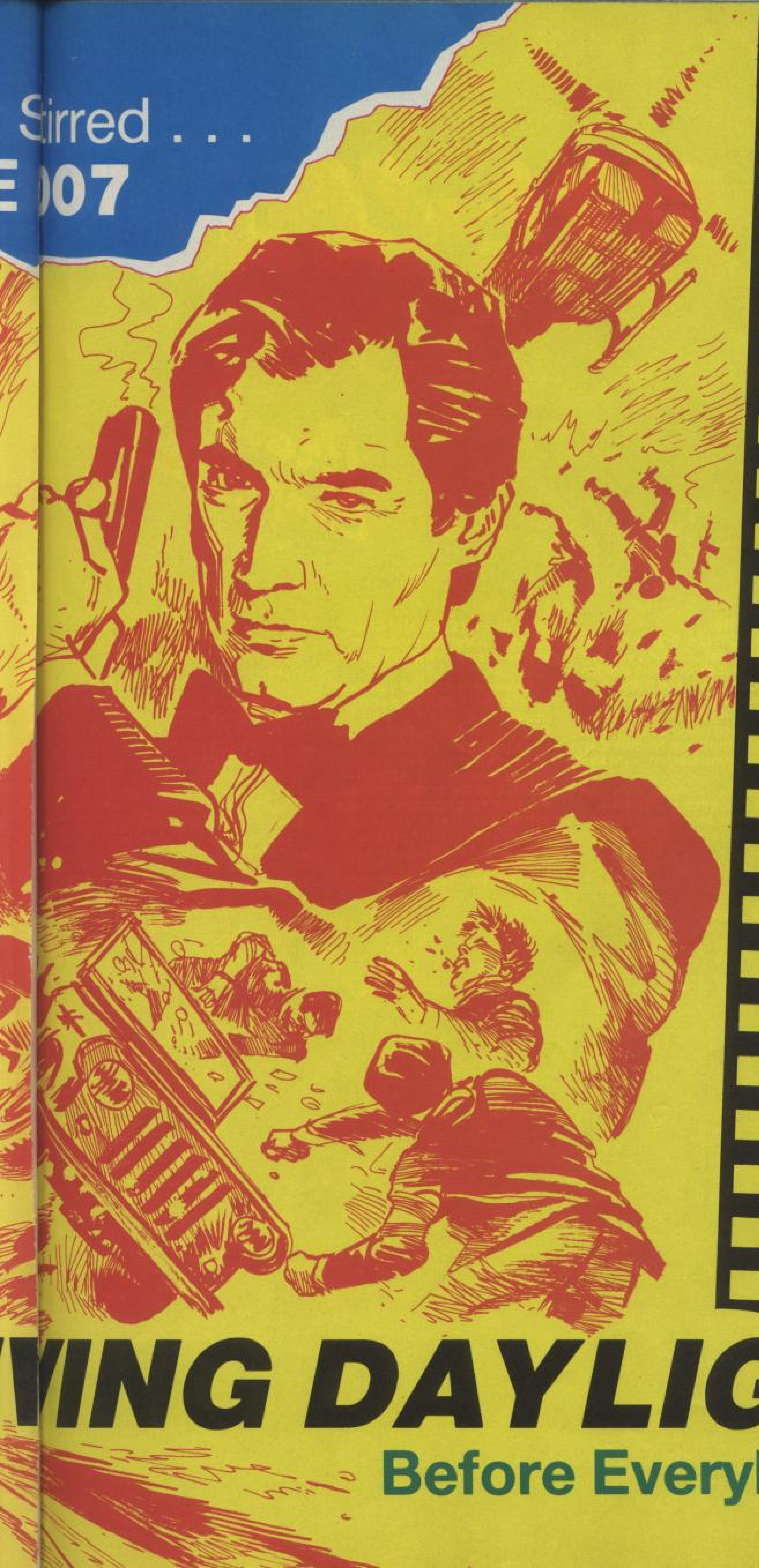
MELBOURNE HOUSE *took a leaf out of ex-Ed Graeme Kidd's shoes (forgive the mixed meaphor) and had a pair of Doc Marten boots and a pair of combat trousers to give away together with one of our CRASH T-Shirts. The winner is* ***Gavin Horne*** *from Holyport, Maidenhead in Berks (incidentally with the following sizes: Footsize: 9, Waist: 32, Inside leg: 29)!*

40 runners up each receive a copy of Bazooka Bill.

Paul Winnard, Co Durham, SR8 1PR; M P Sims, Kent, CT1 1YF; Gary Baker, Surrey, GU24 0LT; Jonathan Wright, Berkshire, RG11 2LH; Paul Tagg, Herts, SG14 2ED; Thomas Roach, Berkshire, SL4 5DT; Mark Fletcher, Cleveland, TS10 3ND; James Sallows, Beds, LU6 3TA; Jerome Kringle, Cheshire, S18 1LJ; Billy Barrett, Kent, TN23 2XY; Marc Hanmore, Isle of Wight, PO36 8DT; Ian Pope, Kent, BR8 7SE; F Douglas, Plymouth, PL3 4EW; Simon Croft, Staffs, DE13 8PZ; Michael Armstrong, Cumbria, CA2 7XD; Jonathan Adamson, Co Durham, SR8 2NG; Nicholas Stylli-Roussolt, Herts, WD1 5BL; Steven Evans, Herts, SG12 0PY; Chris Beck, Rotherham, S61 2JR; Justin Crisp, Lincolnshire, PE9 1UU; K Parsons, W Yorkshire, BD41 9QL; Robert Allen, W Sussex, RH16 3RJ; Steven Irving, Cumbria, CA2 4BY; Andrew Lewis, Worcs, DY12 1DA; Neil Penk, Liverpool, L11 2UD; James Godbeer, Dorset, BH21 6PE; Kevin McCafferty, N Ireland, BT47 2BY; Dennis McEnaney, Ilford, Essex; L Marples, Chesterfield, S44 6UD; Derek Cooper, Leicester, LE12 9TZ; Carl Powell, Middlesex, UB4 8SD; Ian McVicar, Clydebank, G81 4PF; G Gittins, Leicester, LE10 0BU; Brendan Fisher, Derbyshire, DE5 9TB; Matthew Casson, Devon, EX4 2LW; Hamish Rust, Aberdeenshire, Ab5 9YR; Timothy Stone, Winchcombe, Glos; Stephen Tomlinson, Lancs, FY7 7DY; Huw Bucknell, N Humberside, DN14 9HT; Mark James, Midlothian, EH14 7LX.



Stirred . . .
E 007



Courtesy of **DOMARK**, two CRASH readers and a guest each will be privileged to attend a private viewing of the latest James Bond film, ***The Living Daylights*** – a whole week before its Royal Premiere, and days before the general public get to see it in July!

Not only will the lucky winners be among the first to enjoy the thrills of 007's latest exploits, but they will be seeing a new Bond, in the person of **Timothy Dalton**, who has now taken over the role from Roger Moore. Dalton's is an altogether more athletic Bond than we've seen for many a year, and *The Living Daylights* promises to be an action-packed hit.

To coincide with the forthcoming film release, **DOMARK** are hard at work on the computer game (more details next month) and they would like two CRASH winners to help them celebrate their efforts. The private show will be held on **22 June** in the luxurious viewing theatre at **Pinewood Studios**, Iver, Buckinghamshire, where much of the film was shot. Arrival time at Pinewood is 6.30-7pm for the screening at 8pm.

Because of the short lead time, entries must be in **by 15 June at the latest**, and telephone contact numbers should be supplied.

The first two correct entries pulled from Q's bag will win a pair of tickets each. Winners will be informed of final arrangements, but the winners must be prepared to get to Central London at their own cost.

HOW TO SEE THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS

Just answer the following simple questions on a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope. Don't forget your name, address and telephone number! Send your answers to:

1. **What was the very first James Bond film called?**
2. **Bond has driven many cars – what was the famous gun-metal-grey one he used in *Goldfinger*?**
3. **Which earlier Bond film also became a Domark game?**
4. **Timothy Dalton is now Bond, but name four other actors who have played the part.**
5. **Who wrote the original James Bond novels?**

THE LIVING DAYLIGHTS COMPETITION CRASH
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VING DAYLIGHTS

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Crash Competition

For the third and final time, those generous people from FERGUSON, famous for their televisions and monitors, are offering CRASH readers the chance to win an MC05 Monitor and the necessary Interface to link it up to a Spectrum. And to show just as willing, we've thrown in another Spectrum+2 for the outright winner of this competition to celebrate the Adventure Trail EXTRA.

The MC05 is a very neat piece of equipment, allowing you to enjoy a first class colour display for your games, and it also doubles as a telly – so when you tire of searching drawers, picking up keys and using passcards, a prod of a button, a twiddle of a knob, and you can tune in to *East Enders*.

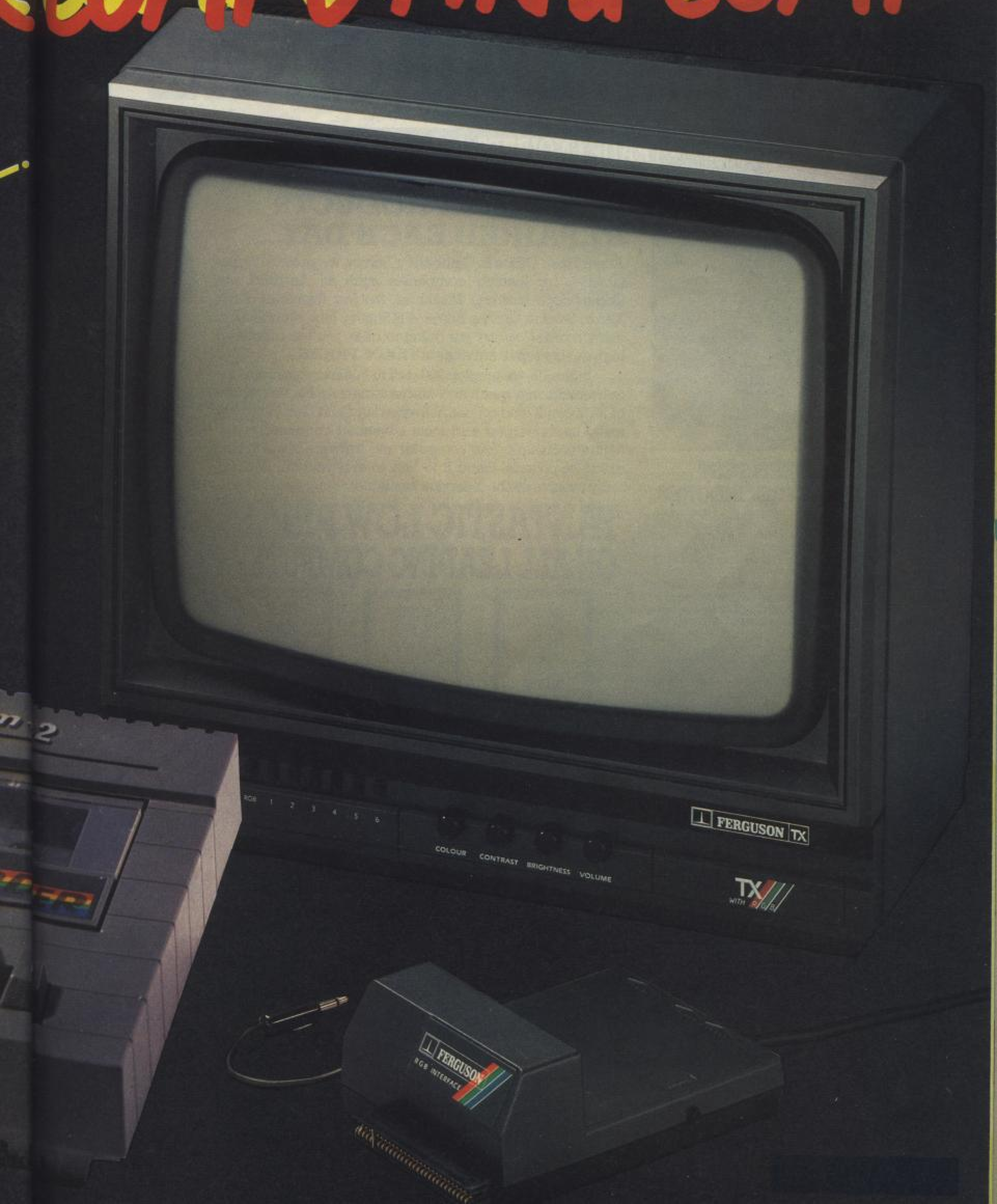
As you can imagine, this kind of technology doesn't come cheap – the Monitor and Interface would normally set you back around £245, and when you add in the Spectrum+2, you're talking in the region of £375.

To win this prize all you have to do is write down the correct answer to the six following CRASH Adventure Trail questions on the back of a postcard (or outside of a sealed envelope) and send it to us at: **ADVENTURE EXTRA COMP, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than 25 June. First correct entry out of the boot of Roger Kean's Deux Cheveaux wins the Monitor, Interface and Computer. The next ten runners-up will each get CRASH Hats and T-shirts for being clever – and lucky.

1. Name Hewson's 'gem' of a text-based adventure.
2. Godzilla in Kent? Whoever could be the author?
3. If you saw Vran, which trilogy would you be in?
4. Type in Frodo's birthday – which game's that?
5. Pete Cooke of *Tau Ceti* fame wrote which of these adventures?
   a) Snowball
   b) Urban Upstart
   c) Bored of the Rings
6. Name the three games comprising Level 9's famous trilogy.



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FRONTLINE



with Philippa Irving



THE STATE OF THE ART

Trinity term has arrived, and in the glorious spring weather the returning students are spreading themselves out on college lawns in a determined effort not to do any work. Meanwhile, those who have Finals in – ulp – seven weeks are contemplating the attractive properties of Magdalen Bridge as they finally realise that the last bit of work they did was to read half a Penguin introduction in their second term three years ago. Oxford rings to the gentle sound of Finalists plunging into the Isis and Japanese cameras clicking.

One thing at least that won't be keeping me from my wonderful revision timetable (and I've got a new one now, I got fed up with the old one) is the pastime which distracted me constantly in my second year two years ago; playing the latest computer game releases. I may still load up an old one, but I know what my tried and tested favourites are like so the compulsive interest and urgency isn't there. *Elite, Doomdark's Revenge, Uridium* and others aren't going to go away and are there to play when I have more time. As for games like *Marsport, Dun Darach* and *Heavy on the Magick*, I've come close to solving these after many dedicated and absorbing hours of play. But in the last six months I haven't bought a single Spectrum game. I intend to get *Starglider* sooner or later, and I'll be buying *The Professional Adventure Writer* when I have enough money to spare, but two pieces of software in six months when I used to buy three a month isn't an impressive total. The reason is simple; almost nothing I've seen recently has interested me enough to part with my limited financial resources.

It's hardly worth re-iterating what every Spectrum gamesplayer must be well aware of these days, that the amalgamation of smaller, innovative companies into big multi-nationals has resulted in a collapsing of standards from underneath. By that I mean that the programming of a game may be as excellent as a 48K machine with attribute blocks trying to look like a dedicated arcade machine can be, but the content – the game and the ideas underneath the on-screen appearance – has drained away. Someone, I suppose, must buy these film and TV licensed games. I presume, in fact, that they must be a really commercial concern for the producers or there would be no point in making them. Occasionally a media licence has resulted in a good game, but on the whole these types of product are being turned into marketing exercises. The cynicism of the big companies is appalling; they must know there's nothing artistically or intellectually satisfying about these pieces of software, but I should imagine that if they shift a reasonable number of units then such considerations are irrelevant.

There were always naff games, but in the past one found honestly bad products like the classic among turkeys, *The Great Space Race*, and weedy platform games with improbable scenarios produced from someone's back bedroom. It used to be much more common, two years ago, for a game to fall down on presentation and programming rather than imaginative input. I am interested in computer games as self-justifying entertainment; works of art, if you use the word in a broad, unpretentious sense. Part of the art is entertaining the player – the plays of Shakespeare are judged not only on the beauty of their poetry but their ability to entertain an audience in the theatre – a part of it is the visual design and something of the quality of imagination in the coding itself. *Starglider* is a game with imaginative coding, and so were *Elite* and *Knight Lore* in their day.

'Elegance' is the word I would use to describe the aesthetic effect of programming like we see in *Marsport* and the Mike Singleton games. Unless a game is designed from the start with the Spectrum in mind, and with an idea which is going to be a computer game and not anything else, we will not see software with these qualities. Theoretically there should be nothing to stop designers taking a theme from a film or television programme and using it to build a computer scenario, but in practice this seems to paralyse the creative abilities.

Wargames are the last bastion of the old-style bad games. I am unlikely ever to find myself reviewing a film license in **Frontline**, despite the popularity of warfilms recently. This would be a good thing if the standard of presentation and programming of wargames was higher! In the meantime, I ought to be grateful. My purse and leisure time (which ought to be revising time) are now freer than they used to be.

BISMARCK

Producer: PSS
Price: **£9.95**

This game occupies a position somewhere hazily between strategy counter-moving and simulation. It is in PSS's familiar house-style, as opposed to what seems to be their 'imported' style; that is, we have slick machine code programming, nice presentation terms of rather bland and pretty graphics, and the admittedly handy 'com-box'.

The arcade sequence, which is predictable from this description, is not, in this case, an optional frill. It attempts to occupy a central position in the game, and justifiably so when you consider the scenario; it concentrates on the part played in World War II by the Bismarck – one of those unsinkable ships which inevitably go down. Historically the Bismarck lived up to the tradition set by the Titanic, and the gameplay of this computer simulation of the brief serving life of the 'pride of the Kriegsmarine' does its best to be authentic in this respect.

The Bismarck was launched into active service on 18 May 1941 and sunk by the flagship of the British home fleet, King George V, on 27 May. It was trying to head towards the mid-Atlantic, where it would keep the British battleships busy and allow its companion-ship, the Prince Eugen, to attack the merchant convoys safely. Before it could break out into the open ocean it was barraged not only by half the British navy, who had intercepted its radio messages and were able to track its position accurately, but by air attack. There is a detailed and well-narrated account of the Bismarck's nine-day reign in the rulebook, which sets the scene admirably and individualises the various British ships which appear on the screen.

The map shows western Europe, Iceland, and a portion of the North Atlantic. If you accept the default option to play the German side, it shows very little else when the game starts; the Bismarck, a small square with a cross on it, awaits orders at the top of the screen. Although the surrounding ocean is teeming with British battleships, convoys and aircraft carriers, the German player is only intermitantly made aware of their positions.

There are icons on the map, in the form of a flag and windsock, representing the command centre and weather station of whichever ▶

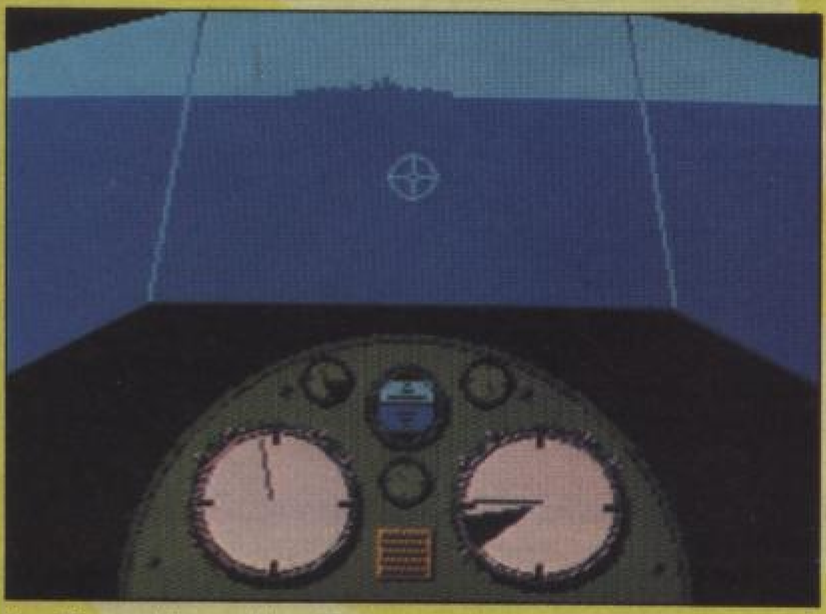
side you're playing. The weather centre can always be accessed with the com-box and shows what the weather conditions across the map are; a pattern of clouds, reminiscent of those new trendy electronic weathermaps, appears superimposed over Europe. If you really want to imitate the television weather forecast on your Spectrum, successive keypresses call up a prediction of where the cloud will be any number of hours later. Cosmetically this is an attractive feature, and the theory is that the German player ought to keep the Bismarck travelling under cloud to minimise the danger from British air attack.

The command centre can only be accessed when it flashes. For the German player it reports U-boat sightings of British ships, which come regularly and are very helpful in attempting to avoid their path. The British player is told of radio intercepts, which pinpoint

com-box is movement but it also accesses the unit's battlescreen.

This is where the famous – or notorious – PSS arcade sequence begins to look surprisingly like a serious attempt at simulation. The battlescreen, which unlike conventional arcade sequences, can be accessed at any time, is split into three sections. The upper part of the screen shows a featureless view of the sea in front of the ship and the enemy if there is one in the vicinity. Other ships appears as highly detailed outlines on the horizon. The middle section is a complex bank of icons and information, which are used to control ship movement and to fire the weapons. The lower part of the screen shows a diagramatic representation of the ship from the side on; as soon as you start getting shelled the point of this display becomes alarmingly apparent as fire spreads through the hull towards the engines and fuel





the Bismarck's position. These radio sightings don't start happening until about halfway through the game, so there's little the British player can intelligently do until then, beyond making sure the navy is in a fairly central position ready to steam towards the Bismarck when it shows up.

The main function of the com-box is, as with other games in this style, to give movement orders to the units. The German player only has control over the Bismarck, while the British player can give orders to a number of battleships and an aircraft carrier. The only order which can be given via the

tanks.

When the Bismarck sails near an enemy unit it appears on the map screen, and even if the other side decides not to engage in battle the ship will probably be visible if you access the battlescreen. Once in view, you can attempt to close on the enemy by selecting the appropriate icon, and when it's in range of your guns you can fire. There seems to be little skill involved in the actual firing. It's a matter of pointing the viewfinder in the right direction and pressing the button, discharging an apparently limitless quantity of shell. PSS tell me that the real skill lies in outmanoeuvring the enemy ships, and certainly, if you let the Bismarck sit there and take substantial damage from an opponent, then you will inevitably lose. Somewhat artificially, hits to the enemy ship are displayed above hits to your own. The Bismarck can take 99 points of damage before sinking, but as shells hit, fires start around the ship and unless these are dealt with you risk having an explosion in the fuel tanks before you're actually shot to pieces.

A separate icon allows the player to move a fire-fighting crew to the scene of the blaze, but in the meantime the enemy may still be firing. Am I being too exacting to point out that on a battleship like the Bismarck, which carried a crew of 2,300 men, it was hardly necessary to stop firing to run with a bucket of water to put out a fire? Probably not, because it puts the player at a disadvantage. The enemy doesn't pause to repair its fire damage. Juggling between combat and fire-fighting mode can become wearisomely fiddly.

The Bismarck is attempting either to reach the southern edge of the map reasonably intact, or to get to Brest with at least one sunk British ship to its name. This sounds easy and is extremely and depressingly difficult, as the historical disadvantage the Bismarck was under is ruthlessly reproduced. The ship only has 99 hit points and no way of recovering them once lost, several at a time, to enemy shells. It follows therefore that the Bismarck ought to avoid any combat if at all possible and head for the south edge of the map, despite an injunction in the rules to keep clear of battleships but sink everything else. In practice, it's very difficult to avoid being caught up in battle. Obvious British tactics unfortunately encourage a kamikazi mentality, for sending weaker ships to certain death against the Bismarck can do a significant amount of permanent damage. There ought to be penalties for suicidal strategies; as it is, you get 'A British Victory' and a respectable percentage for scuppering all of your ships except one which was on the point of exploding from fire damage. It's good to note at least that actually shooting at your own ships is not tolerated.

The game proceeds in real time, with a choice of pace between fast, medium and slow. Fast is not particularly speedy, and there should be no reason to want to slow up what happens on the map screen. The quick pacing means that the game is unlikely to last for a long time, and that – to me – contributes to an impression of shallowness. Other players may like a game which has fixed boundries and a definite resolution within the space of an hour.

The rules come in a small high-quality booklet and are nicely presented; there's an index table, illustrations of symbols used on the screen, and useful information about the military capabilities of the ships. All aspects of gameplay are clearly described in a meaningful sequence, and the historical overview is well-written and interesting. The standard of PSS documentation seems to be improving.

Bismarck is a smoothly-presented, undemanding game which tries to make an arcade sequence work as an integral part of a wargame. Of that type, a type PSS are creating, it *is* successful. I remained unconvinced that this particular style of wargame has anywhere to go; it's too glib, it seems too much of a pale reflection of what it's attempting to blend, and it doesn't offer enough of a long-term challenge. But there's a lot packed into *Bismarck*, and this may be a game which younger and inexperienced wargamers will enjoy.

PRESENTATION 87%
Options offered are comprehensive, the packaging is attractive (though PSS have gone over to those boring double cassette boxes now) and the on-screen impression is polished.

RULES 85%
Not voluminous, but detailed in all important respects, well-presented, and helpful.

PLAYABILITY 80%
Very easy to get into.

AUTHENTICITY 79%
The introductory material in the rulebook creates an atmosphere, but aspects of the simulation-sequence are unconvincing.

OPPONENT 74%
As the British the computer is vicious, as the Germans, it knows its own victory conditions.

VALUE 70%
Depends what you're looking for – some people may find it's all over too quickly for their money.

GRAPHICS 80%
The unexciting appearance of the map-screen is offset by very pretty touches, such as the weather forecast, the icons and the ship outlines.

OVERALL 75%
Well produced, with some scope for varied play; not a long-term challenge.

ZULU WARS

Producer: CCS
Price: **£8.95**

This latest game from CCS takes a little-exposed conflict between the British and the Zulu tribes towards the end of the nineteenth century for its scenario, which I can't help welcoming as a change from the endless re-enactments of the Second World War which, after four months of editing **Frontline**, are beginning to make me feel as if I'm trapped in a recurring time loop.

On the other hand, there's little point in novelty for its own sake. Each game must stand on its own merits, independent of previous releases. *Zulu Wars* uses its



scenario to work some interesting and novel elements into the gameplay, and with two separate programs, one on either side of the tape, it would seem to offer value for money too: but it's let down, as far too many wargames are, by shoddy unprofessional programming.

There are two scenarios which must be loaded separately, and one – the easier, *Umlalazi* – is based on a battle which just might have happened, but didn't. Although I'm all for speculative wargaming, this suggests to me that the potential of the historical material is limited somewhat; particularly when it turns out that the start-up conditions of the battle on the first side of the tape have had to be tweaked considerably to give the Zulus any chance at all. *Zulu Wars* might be more accurately titled 'Variations on the Zulu Wars'!

Still, it's an academic exercise anyway to believe that little boxes on a computer screen bear anything more than a numerical resemblance to what really happened on the battlefield, and although I'm strongly in favour of as much historical backing in the packaging as possible to assist this act of faith, an approximation is always inevitable. The leaflet that comes in the standard double cassette box describes the political situation in Africa which led up to the outbreak of the wars, and the specific conditions of each scenario, in a concise but adequate way. The Zulu Wars were caused by British imperialistic ambition in the twentieth century, or rather the curious British belief prevalent then that only they were competent to 'keep the peace' in Africa; on this occasion, between the Boers of The Transvaal and the Zulus of Zululand, which was recognised by Britain as a sovereign state. In 1879, the British moved into annexe Zululand and met a well-organised native army which, despite its strength and tactics, ended up as cannon-fodder to the technological might of the Empire. This outcome was entirely predictable and although, as I say, the balance has been unhistorically redressed, this is still one of those wargames it's difficult to lose.

For reasons which become apparent once play has started, and is for once excusable, there is no two-player option or choice of side. The player takes command of the British forces, under General Chelmsford in *Ulundi* and Major-General Crealock in *Umlalazi*, against the computer, which controls the Zulus. Play takes place on a small scale, the screen representing, in curiously distorted perspectives, individual buildings and foliage on the battlefield. The units themselves are shown not as traditional, symbolic boxes but as a matrix of little stick men which dwindle, rather alarmingly, as damage is incurred.

In the first scenario the player has 13 blocks of stick men to march against the Zulus, and they're often difficult to manoeuvre through closely-placed obstacles, or indeed past each other. The clumsiness of the British movement is irritating only before it becomes apparent that it's part of the gameplay; historically, it represents the regimentation and rigid formation of the British troops, and in game terms it gives the Zulu forces an advantage to compensate for the player's superior firepower.

The units have a fixed efficiency rating and a fluctuating morale rating, and a number of movement points based on their efficiency. When each unit is highlighted in turn by the computer the name of the regiment is displayed along with a bar-chart of these simple statistics, and reference to a list in the rules gives the exact number of men in it. This list, which even tells the curious what the regiment's present designation is, is the sort of helpful, easy-reference feature that I'm always glad to see in a rulebook.

Three difficulty levels are offered, which simply determine how many hundreds and thousands of Zulus you get thrown at you. At Full Battle level the figure is 40,000 spear-waving warriors against 5,300 infantry and 900 cavalry! Once the difficulty level has been selected, the games start automatically; and so do the impressions of tackiness and awkward programming. The player is treated to a demonstration of the appalling scrolling routine, which churns the map laboriously back and forth across the screen in the most incompetent and flickering way I've see on a recent game. But this is a wargame, not *Uridium*, and so, generously recognising this is trivial – a matter of aesthetics, really – the player might be annoyed to discover this ugly routine is the only way of viewing the map available. It cannot be scrolled under the player's control, only by a single keypress which gives a repetition of the guided tour.

Movement and combat for the British is combined into the same phase, and the computer selects units in turn for attention. Fortunately, a selected unit can be passed until later. The units are all crowded together and getting in each other's way at the start of the scenario, so this system becomes laborious and fiddly, but also creates an atmosphere of inflexibility which no doubt reflects the battle tactics of the British forces at the time; and the system itself is quick enough to operate once you've got used to its idiosyncracies.

All units can fire once in a round, and can engage in close combat as they come into contact with the enemy. As the game progresses, the physical size of the units diminish because of losses and this affects directly – in a visible way – how much damage they can do by firing into the Zulus. Gunfire is the player's most effective weapon against the Zulu hordes, because they have no guns themselves and so no way of retaliating in the same combat. Close combat can prove dangerous, although the British still have the advantage over the Zulus; the morale of a unit starts to decrease if they take more losses than their opponent, and the lower the moral, the more likely defeat becomes.

Once movement and combat is completed to the player's satisfaction, the return can be ended and the Zulus begin to move. This is when it becomes obvious why the game is one-player only, with no choice of sides; the Zulu movement is radically different from the British. Instead of attacking in clumsy rectangles, they swarm individually onto the screen and around the British regiments like ants; they start in struggling waves but soon break up to envelope the player's units, one stick man at a time. This is the novel element of *Zulu Wars*, and it represents a fair attempt at figures wargaming on the computer in a limited, one-sided way. It would be difficult for a human player to move these large numbers of figures individually unless the overall standard of game design were very much better than this. But *Zulu Wars* has to be noted as one of the few games which makes use of the computer's abilities to do something a bit more imaginative than calculating damage.

The British victory conditions are simply to kill all of the Zulus, and it is supposedly the Zulu's aim to kill the leader in each scenario. This is something they do not pursue, however, with any enthusiasm and the only threat to the British lies in the sheer numbers of the enemy. The Zulu pattern of attack is predictable and always identical – they come in from three sides of the map in an attempt to envelope the British, then move in to surround each regiment – and, after a few attempts, I came to realise that there's little scope for variety of tactics. The battle formation of the troops is predetermined and there's too little space to move imaginatively, for within three moves of the start you're so overwhelmed by the Zulus that it's just a case of wearing them down.

The programming is unacceptably inconsiderate in places – for instance, in the Zulu combat phase the program solemnly scrolls around to each British unit to decide whether it's under attack or not – and although it's never actually slow enough to make me reach for the plug, I am beginning to get depressed by the standard of some software turned out professionally packaged by respectable companies. A computer-literate friend hacked into *Zulu Wars* for me on the suspicion that it was in BASIC, and came out with the conclusion that it looked like it had been put through a BASIC compiler.

It's playable enough, but has little depth and nowhere to go. The higher levels offer no extra complications, just more and more swarming Zulus to outlive. This game would have been more acceptable at a budget price.

PRESENTATION 39%
Abysmal scrolling and an overall shoddiness outweighs the acceptably straightforward orders sequence.

RULES 70%
Brief, but clearly set out with a couple of particularly useful notes.

PLAYABILITY 72%
The incompetent presentation only just fails to get in the way of playability, which is very enjoyable for the first couple of games.

AUTHENTICTY 70%
Although the author seems to have taken liberties with the historical set-up, the way the Zulus move is atmospheric and satisfying.

OPPONENT 65%
All the same they seem unaware of their own victory conditions.

VALUE 59%
Little lasting interest.

GRAPHICS 66%
Unambiguous as far as the units go, though the map looks slightly odd.

OVERALL 61%
Some interesting features, playable for an afternoon, badly programmed and unlikely to prove of lasting interest.

FRONTLINE



FORUM

I'm greatly encouraged by the volume and quality of mail I've been getting ever since I appealed to the nation. Quite clearly there are a great many wargamers out there who are enthusiastic about our special interest, and involved enough to write at length to Frontline. If only I were allowed more space, I could print a wider cross-section of your correspondence. Many people have asked if it would be possible to have a wargames chart, and thanks to the incredible kindness (they asked me to put that in) of my editor, there now will be. Check out the form on these pages and use your vote to help create a CRASH Wargamers' Top Ten each month.

HIDDEN INTELLIGENCE

Dear Philippa,
Your comments in the March issue of CRASH concerning the pros and cons of the computer wargame were very interesting, particularly your request for more information on the 'hidden rules'. My own view is that part of the appeal of these games is that they lack most of the verbiage normally associated with wargames rules. After all, how many real generals were provided with reams of statistics?

The most significant problem that has plagued every type of wargame is the ability of the participants to see everything that's happening together with the telepathic way that troops are able to respond to any new situation. Not only should the hidden forces be hidden from each other; both generals should often have only limited knowledge of the whereabouts of their own troops, especially in periods before the invention of the radio. The computer is the only medium with a reasonable chance of being able to incorporate such concepts but little has been done up to now, apart from using anonymous squares to hide the identity of units. I also find staring at the wallpaper while my opponent makes his move rather tedious.

The only game that has come close to what I would like to see in a computer wargame is *Doomdark's Revenge*. Just imagine an historical scenario incorporating the same features. The 'armies' would become divisions, or corps, each having a commander with his own 'personality'. All the problems connected with hidden movement (and many others) would be solved in ways that no wargamer could have envisaged a few years ago. All we need now is someone with the time and inclination to turn the dream into reality.
Yours strategically – Bryan Hurt.

I'm a great admirer of Mike Singleton's games and it astonishes me that, with several prolific and professional software houses specialising in wargames, no-one has produced a genuinely artistic, Spectrum-stretching game like Doomdark's Revenge. *I agree that limited intelligence is one thing a computer can handle very easily, although I don't know if lack of communication between generals and troops could be made to work in practice.*

THE NEW CRASH STRATEGY CHART!

Here it is folks, the chart you've been waiting for (your chance to engage in some strategic voting). Let us know your favourite five strategy programs, and enter a draw for £20's worth of software and a fabulous CRASH T-Shirt. Five runners-up will also receive a T-Shirt, so post those coupons today.

The following are my five favourite strategy games in order of choice . . .

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

Name ....

Address ....

....

In the unlikely event that I win the £20's worth of software, I would like the following games (not necessarily strategy!)

....

T-Shirt Size S ☐ M ☐ L ☐

Completed coupons should be sent to PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB, to be received no later than June 10th 1987.

LEAVE HITLER ALONE

Dear Philippa,
I would like to make a plea through your pages to the software companies producing wargames.

Almost exclusively software houses stick with the old faithfuls of WWII and Napoleonic periods, no doubt because they are the most popular and therefore commercial.

However, on receipt of each new release I and a few friends invariably study the battle or campaign in more detail, therefore widening our knowledge. I firmly believe that releases covering less popular periods would inspire similar study (eg, Naseby, Six Day War, or Ancients).

So there it is; please, all you authors – give a little thought to other theatres and periods and let poor old Napoleon and Mr Hitler have a temporary rest.

One other thing in parting. I would like to echo the sentiment expressed by Ally Hume in Issue 37 when he made a plea for a strategy games creator (I remember Argus Press advertising one for the C64 some time ago, would a conversion be in order?).
SK Jamison, Newtonabbey.

I'm most impressed that you research a wargame to play it. That sounds an excellent way of getting the most for your money, and compensating for scanty or unimaginative background material in the rule book. On the subject of strategy game creators, **Bob Kerr** *of Bury St Edmunds has written to say that he finds the 1983 Lothlorien game* Confrontation, *which apparently has a very comprehensive set of user-definable options, to be ideal for this purpose.*

CONCISE BUT . . .

Dear Philippa,
Just dropping a note about the game *Samurai* you reviewed in the April CRASH. If its rules were 'concise and uninformative', why did you give them 90 percent?
N Nealson, London.

I wondered that too! Probably for the same reason that a tank from Tobruk *wandered into* Vulcan. *There were a lot of typos in the April CRASH Frontline. Here is a correction:*
RULES 60%
Concise and uninformative.

BRIEFING

Doomdark's Revenge is an old game now, but it's still one of the best strategy games available for the Spectrum. **Tony Beadon** from Letchworth has written in with advice about one of its more esoteric elements, the crowns. The Crown of Imiriel is to be found in the Hill of Haginoen, and should be taken by Luxor to any tower, where he will be told the position of the crown of Varenand; a useful fashion accessory which draws all the other characters you control to Luxor's position, magically. If you visit a tower with a crown in your possession you will be told the position of the next crown, and some of them have surprising and entertaining uses.

Several of you have sent strategies for the new R T Smith game *Vulcan*, including **Frank David Beilby** from Doncaster, **Sandy Nook** from Liverpool, and **Mogens Laurisden** all the way from Denmark. From their detailed letters, I've collected some general tips to help you make a successful start on the game.

Forces should always be conserved, particularly the panzer divisions, and offensives should never be launched until all your forces are ready.

It's always best to travel along roads, unless there's no alternative. Enemy units usually do. But beware of ambushes!

Attacks should be made from a position of strength by stacks of three or four units. But be careful about stacking too heavily in the face of Axis air superiority, as this leaves you vulnerable to enemy airpower.

Reccerces are often more useful than air strikes.

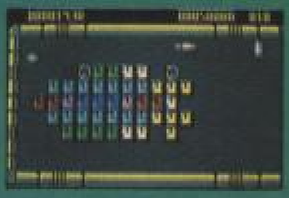
Mountains make excellent defensive positions for dug-in and fortified infantry.

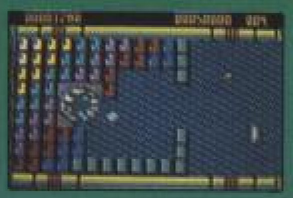
Allied tanks are scarce so should be used sparingly; they're particularly useful for attacking infantry units caught without cover.

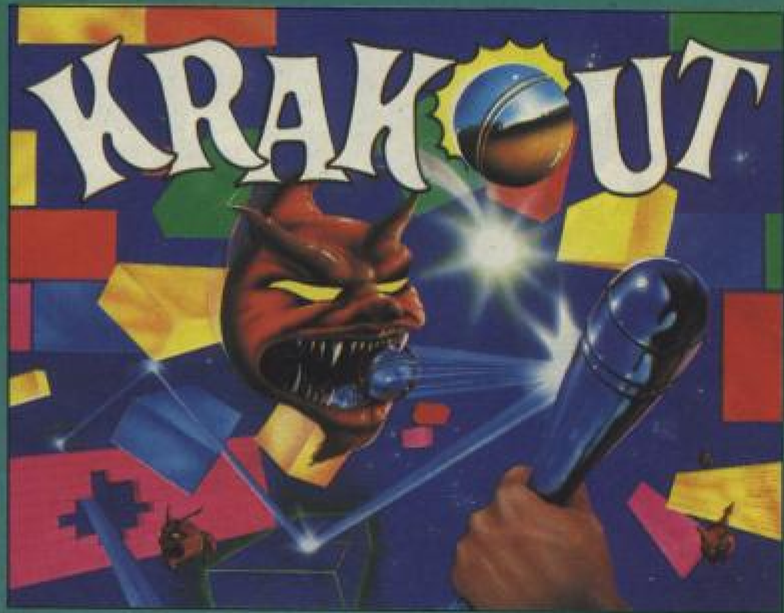
Never allows units to run out of supply, as this lays them open to attack. To conserve supplies when fortifying, use a mixture of dig-in and hold commands.

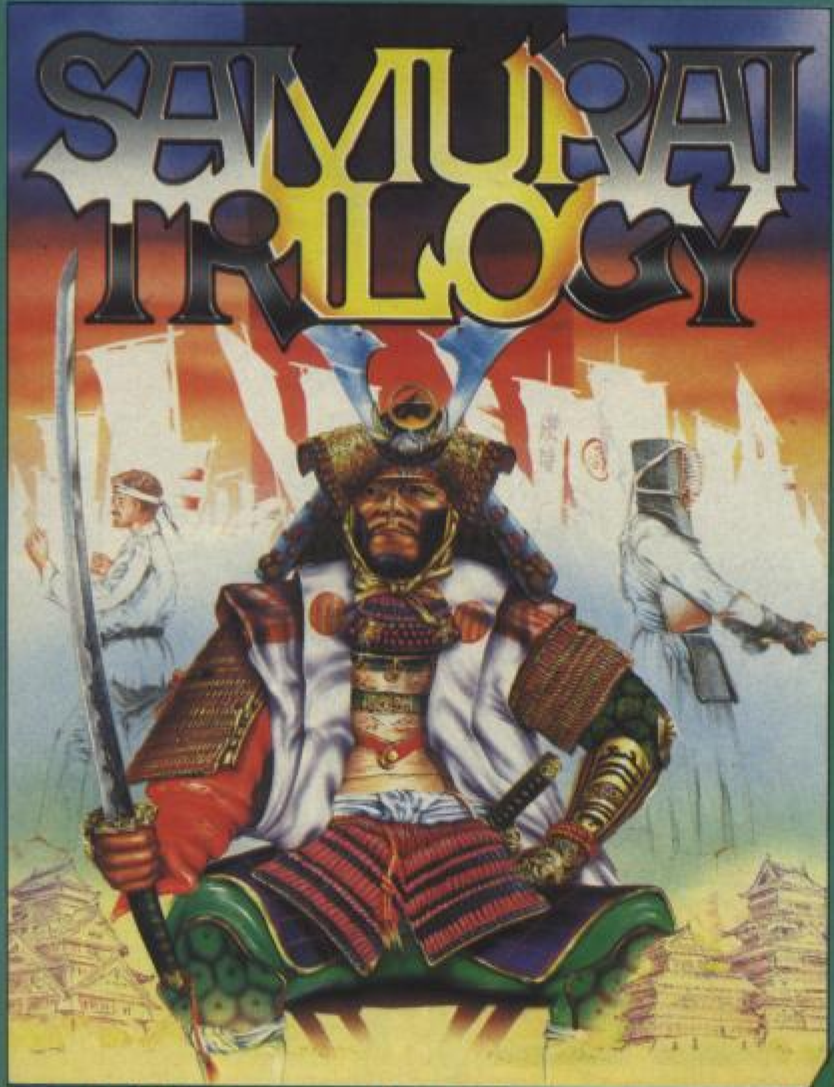
If you're losing a battle, run for it!

Software...

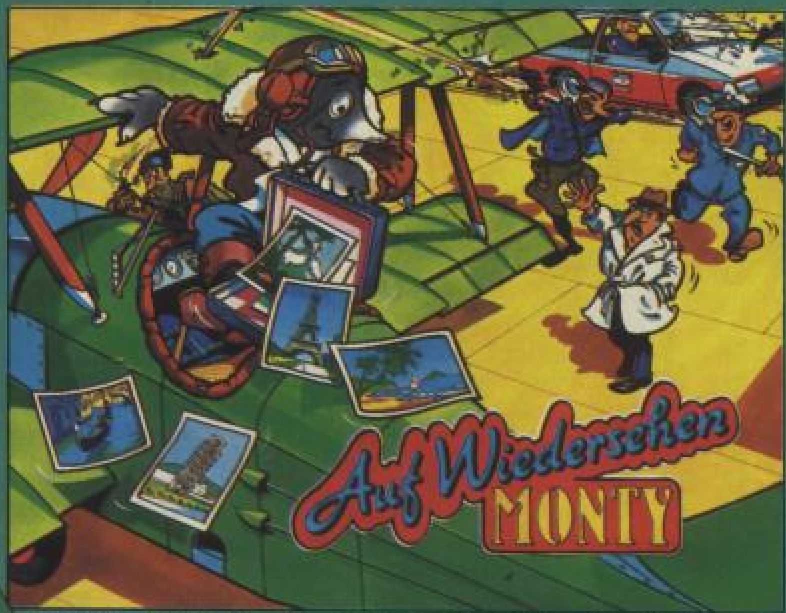




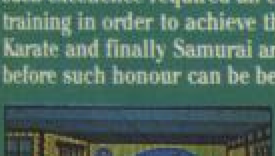


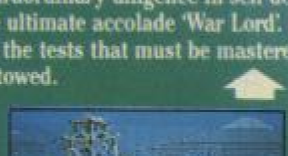


Welcome to the ultimate challenge! A two way test of skill and nerve – can you out manouevre the awesome ogre and blast a path through the myriad of colourful bricks? Are your reflexes adept enough to retrieve the speeding missile, defelected from its block shattering journey or regurgitated contemptuously from the ogre's mouth?

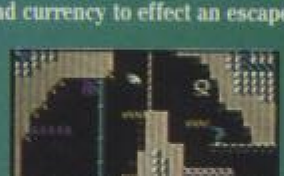


In an age in which honour was revered, from a time when grace and beauty were virtues, a class of warriors set themselves apart to dedicate their lives to a perfection in combat that in itself was an artform, to a discipline of mind that became a religion. The attaining of such excellence required an extraordinary diligence in self-denial and training in order to achieve the ultimate accolade 'War Lord'. Kendo, Karate and finally Samurai are the tests that must be mastered before such honour can be bestowed.





Monty the Mole is still on the run on his most exciting and exacting journey to date, a whistle stop tour of the capitals of Europe, acquiring more than just the local scenery on the way. With Intermole and the local gendarmes hot on his tail Monty must fill his booty bag with enough continental treasures and currency to effect an escape to his dream island ... Montos.





that's out of this world

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Spectrum £7.99 Tape
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Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd., Alpha House, 10 Carver Street, Sheffield S1 4FS England.



IS SMALL BEAUTIFUL?

One-time reviewer and Playing Tipster ROBIN CANDY returns to the pages of CRASH to discuss the arguments for and against a software industry run by distributors and large software houses.

Flicking through the pages of the very first issue of CRASH (February 1984), it soon becomes apparent that the number of software houses in operation in those far off days was greater than today's. Such names as Abacus, DJL Software, Starzone and Doric graced the pages. That month's top game (this was the pre-CRASH Smash era) was *3D Death Chase* by Micromega, a company which went on to produce several top-notch games, but disappeared as quickly as it had arrived.

Many of today's big names were either in their infancy or non-existent – for instance, a fledgling Ocean had recently changed their name from Spectrum, and Firebird were a long way from their first release. The only really big software house of the time was Imagine, a company armed with the marketing power we take for granted nowadays (however the Liverpudlian company were wound up for failing to pay their substantial advertising debts, and the rights to Imagine's name and logo was eventually purchased from the Receiver by a rapidly growing Ocean). In general, the software industry was a home-run affair controlled by enthusiasts rather than corporate businessmen.

One of the advantages of a software industry run by larger companies is that there's no longer a need to sell via mail order; they have the power to get into the chain stores and create a shop-based market. During the early Eighties most software was purchased through mail-order. Numerous classified advertisements festooned the pages of magazines, promoting games with 'High Res Graphics', 'Amazing Sound' and the infamous '100% Machine Code.' Having sent the cheque or postal order, the customer then waited the customary 28 days . . . but all too often it took slightly longer for the game to appear.

When your box of delights did finally arrive, it often turned out that the product didn't live up to the advertisement's boasts – in fact the game was inevitably some poor clone of the *Pacman* or *Donkey Kong* types that were so popular in the arcades. One particular product which springs to mind is the motor racing simulation *Formula One* (Spirit Software) which was advertised as including a steering wheel for extra realism. When the game eventually turned up, after inquiries by the police into the software house's background, the so-called 'steering wheel' proved to be nothing more than an ashtray-shaped plastic bowl, which was rolled along the top row of keys to steer the car from left to right.

Of course the real problem with mail order was the worry about whether you would actually receive your goods at all. Tales of companies folding after cashing customers' cheques were not uncommon, and there was little the public could do in this event. After the computer sales boom of 83/84, more special-

Some of the main Spectrum games-producing companies which existed in 1984 but that are either no longer with us, have been bought out, or have otherwise changed their circumstances dramatically:

Abacus (ceased trading)
Addictive Games (Prism)
Adventure International (US Gold)
A'n'F (Argus Press Software)
Anirog (stopped doing games)
Arcade Software (ceased trading)
Atarisoft (stopped)
Automata (ceased trading)
Beyond (British Telecom)
Bug-Byte (Argus Press Software)
Carnell (Mastertronic)
Crystal Computing (became Design Design, now development only)
Digital Fantasia (Adventure International then US Gold)
DJL Software (ceased trading)
DK'tronics (now hardware only)
Elephant (ceased trading)
Doric (became Dorcas, now ceased trading)
Fantasy (originally called Quest, ceased trading)
Games Machine (ceased trading)
Imagine (into receivership, sold to Ocean)
Level 9 (Rainbird/British Telecom)
Lyversoft (ceased trading)
Lothlorien (Argus Press Software)
Melbourne House (Mastertronic)
Micromania (ceased trading)
Micromega (stopped doing games)
Mikro-Gen (Creative Sparks Distribution)
New Generation (Virgin)
Noble House (ceased trading)
Phipps Associates (ceased trading)
Poppysoft (ceased trading)
Postern (ceased trading)
Procom (ceased trading)
Quicksilva (Argus Press Software)
Rabbit (Virgin)
R & R Software (ceased trading)
Richard Shepherd (ceased trading)
Richard Wilcox (absorbed by Elite Systems)
Severn (ceased trading)
Silversoft (absorbed into CRL)
Softek (mostly operating with The Edge)
Starzone (ceased trading)
Terminal (ceased trading)
Ultimate (US Gold)
Visions (ceased trading)
Vortex (US Gold)

ist software shops opened and the big chain stores joined the market. This led to the eventual decline of the mail order market.

In August 83 Ian Sinclair of IJK (a company that produced games for the Oric and BBC) wrote '. . . the public loves arcade games, while reviewers hate them, and original games have the opposite effect.' Things haven't changed much, and although the success of many original games has proved that there is a niche for them, many of today's best-sellers are arcade conversions or variants on that theme. Arcade originals are designed to entice the player to part with money and flash up the 'Game Over' message as quickly as possible, ready for the next unwitting customer. When translating a program to a home computer format, the programmer strives to emulate the features that made the original successful. These usually consist of outstanding graphics, superb sound and an overall impression that a lot is happening on screen. Naturally such features swallow up memory, leaving little room to create any game 'depth'. Many arcade games lose their atmosphere when translated to a home computer; for instance, one of the attractions of *Gauntlet* was trying to find one more 10p before your character died!

> **"The bigger software houses seem to produce games that catch the eye rather than striving for originality."**

Thus many arcade conversions sell well on appearances alone. Conversely the more complex arcade adventures, like those produced by Gargoyle Games and Hewson, manage to create a game with more behind it than zapping everything in sight – but usually at the expense of the graphics. This type of game *can* achieve a reasonable standard of graphics, but rarely as good as their arcade rivals. A case in point are two games by Gargoyle/FTL. The first, *Marsport*, was an arcade adventure of great depth, and while its graphics were quite good, they eventually became boring. An arcade game by the same programmers, *Lightforce*, produced outstanding graphics and animation, while the game itself was quite straightforward.

It seems that outstanding gameplay coupled with great graphics is almost unobtainable. What this is all leading up to is that the bigger software houses seem to produce games that catch the eye rather than striving for originality. Any new idea that sells well is quickly done to death by the numerous clones that follow hard on its heels – just look at the number of martial arts titles available. When Ultimate's *Knight Lore* first appeared, it introduced an ingenious method of presentation. Since then the same style has been used on many games, ensuring a certain level of sales. Games which use these graphics are playing safe in much the same way that the *Pacman* clones of yesteryear did.

Much of the software industry is now run by highly efficient corporations, who control the interests of smaller software labels. This means that the direction which new software takes is in the hands of a relatively small number of people. This includes the main distributors, who have selection boards to decide whether a game is worth distributing – after all, you can only buy what's been released.

When *Deus Ex Machina* (a program devised by Mel Croucher) was released, the selection boards rejected it because it couldn't be easily categorised – despite the rave reviews it received from many magazines. Consequently the game did not do as well as it deserved. These large companies are in the business to make a profit and to achieve maximum market penetration of their products. To do this money is poured into lavish advertising campaigns to promote products which often don't live up to the expectations raised by such marketing strategies.

Licensing deals are currently all the rage, particularly if they're tie-ins with the latest hit movies. The product has to be released while the film is still firmly fixed in the public's mind, and by the time the advertising has been booked and the deal bought, there's little time or money left to be spent on the actual product. As a result, the end product has had to be put together hurriedly, and is often a rather poor game with little connection to the film. *Rambo* was an average game which sold well because of the film tie-in; in reality it was nothing more than a variant on the well-worn *Commando*-type game.

The smaller software houses that do specialize in original games without the need for tie-ins don't get the financial rewards they deserve because they can't afford the lavish advertising campaigns needed to promote their products. Micromega was a software house that created original high-quality games, but their parent company felt the returns were not high enough to justify to continuing in the games software market – a case of a company disappearing despite producing popular games. Smaller companies just can't compete with the marketing skills of the likes of Ocean and Firebird. In order to ensure financial success, some software houses have resorted to selling their products through a third party. This is usually one of the bigger software houses, as in the case of Firebird and Realtime, Level 9 and Rainbird – in both cases, British Telecom are the driving force. To be fair to the larger companies though, this does allow the design teams to concentrate their skills on the end product rather than on how to sell it.

> **"In general, the software industry was a home-run affair controlled by enthusiasts."**

The advantages and disadvantages of this industry structure are easily summarised: software is now more easily available at specialist shops and chain stores; there's little risk of not getting your product after parting with your money; programmers don't have to worry about how to market games. There are of course disadvantages: hype can lead to raised expectations for a product which turns out to be sub-standard; smaller companies find it hard to compete; originality sometimes suffers because software houses don't always want to risk putting out a new game concept.

THE FAMILY TREES

MASTERTRONIC
- Bulldog
  - M.A.D.
    - Carnell
    - Melbourne House

US GOLD
- Americana
  - English
  - Vortex
  - Ultimate

ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE
- Mind Games
  - Lothlorien
  - Bug-Byte
  - Quicksilva
  - A'n'F

VIRGIN GAMES
- Now Games
  - New Generation
  - Rabbit
  - Leisure Genius

BRITISH TELECOM
- Firebird
- Rainbird
- Level 9
- Beyond

OCEAN
- Imagine

ACTIVISION
- Electric Dreams
- System 3

JAPAN has a word for the



CLU CLU LAND The evil Sea Urch has hidden the gold in an underground mystery maze.

BASEBALL It's the most realistic baseball game outside of a ballpark!

HOGAN'S ALLEY Use your Zapper light gun to shoot the gangsters.

DUCK HUNT There's a duck in the air! You've only got three shots to bag this duck. And if you miss, even your dog laughs at you in this fast-action Zapper Gun game.

GYROMITE You've got to keep R.O.B.'s gyroscope spinning to help a mad scientist de-activate the dynamite in his laboratory in order to play this action-packed game!

GOLF Choose your clubs. Control your swings. Select the angle of every shot. It's Nintendo GOLF and there's not a video golf game on par with it anywhere!

For the first time in the UK direct from Japan comes Nintendo, the home entertainment system with genuine arcade-quality graphics. Nintendo make 2 out of 3 of all the world's coin-op arcade machines, so they know what they're doing. And already, in Japan 9½ million homes have a Nintendo home entertainment system.

Now you can enjoy the amazing 52 colour 3-D graphics of Nintendo. (On most home computers, you've been lucky to get 16 colours until now!) Nintendo's superb graphics give the games a convincing true 3-D feel with actual shadows which add depth to the characters.

Already there are 27 Nintendo Game Paks available in the UK and more are being added to the software library all the time. But there's even more to Nintendo than the best games you've ever seen...

Nintendo Entertainment System

For the first time home entertainment enters a new dimension. Because when you own a Nintendo entertainment system you also get a buddy to play with, a Robotic Operating Buddy to be exact (or R.O.B. to his friends). He's your partner. Seat him next to you, send him signals from your tv screen and together you can tackle the enemy.

The Zapper Gun

Never before has there been a video gun of this calibre. The astonishing light sensitive Zapper Gun lets you shoot moving targets with pinpoint accuracy from up to 16 feet! If you think you're a sharp shooter the Zapper Gun will test your skill to the full.

Nintendo or Super Nintendo, the choice is yours.

Which set do you want? NINTENDO's superb high-quality action costs £129.99* for control deck, mains transformer, two hand controls, and one free Super Mario Bros Game Pak. DELUX NINTENDO costs £199.99* for the amazing Zapper Gun, R.O.B., and two free games, Gyromite and Duck Hunt.

Win a smashing game and a host of other goodies in Melbourne House's

SHADOWS OF MORDER

COMPETITION

but first . . .
A SHORT STORY
By JRR Minion

Hobbiton had a strange air about it one particular morning. None of the Hobbits quite knew what was going on – even the wise old Tooks were puzzled.

'Ooo,' said Frodo Baggins as he walked out of his cosy hole this bright and sunny morning, 'what is going on?'

'I dunno Master Frodo, s'ming strange,' said his long-time friend Sam Gamgee, still trying to wipe the sleep out his eyes after a heavy night on old Barleymow's ale. 'It's not them nasty old Black Riders again is it – Ize don't like them, funny people if you ask me.' he continued.

'No, I don't think so,' answered Frodo scratching his bottom, 'the air smells of that Melbourne House lot.'

'Oh gar, they gimme the creeps, I think Ize going back to bed – flaming computer people, why can't they leave us to our own devices?' moaned poor old Sam as he tripped over an elven Goblet that was nestling in the grass, still glistening from the misty dew. Sam got up and muttered something under his breath and promptly threw the Goblet into the air.

Meanwhile two halflings were frolicking in a nearby leafy glade when the Goblet came flying into view . . . BONK! it went as it landed on the head of Stephanie Vizer (the young dwarf at Melbourne House); 'Owww S . . . !', exclaimed the startled halfling. 'Now, what am I going to do with this?'

'I know!' said a fair maiden named Jo, whose voice was as fresh as a lark's song. 'We'll give it away in an amazing competition in CRASH – we can even get the winner's name engraved on it, and we can give posters, games and mugs away too!'

And that's exactly what they did do!

THE END

WIN! ★ An engraved silver-plated goblet! ★ Copies of the game! ★ Mugs and posters too!

So, there we are, or you – depending on which way you look at it. Melbourne House is stumping up the silver plated goblet, with the winner's name engraved on it, and a copy of *Shadows of Mordor* as first prize; then there's ten second prizes of the game, posters and Mugs, AND ten runners up prizes of the game. To win one of these fabulous Tolkien-esque goodies simply find all the words in the following wordsquare and post the solution off to: **SHADOW COMP, CRASH, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** – and make sure that you get 'em here by the 25 June.

TOLKIEN ✓
HOBBIT ✓
MORDOR ✓
FRODO ✓
SAM ✓
RIDERS ✓
GOBLET ✓
SHADOWS ✓
SMASH ✓

T	O	L	K	D	F	R	O	D
J	K	T	E	L	B	O	G	H
S	H	A	F	R	O	D	O	S
W	L	D	R	L	M	R	T	A
O	N	T	I	B	B	O	H	M
D	W	O	O	W	L	M	A	S
A	S	X	D	K	O	V	I	S
H	O	P	I	Z	T	X	E	D
S	R	E	D	I	R	S	N	S
O	N	R	I	D	U	R	S	M

Name .... Terry Winstanley
Address .... 8 New Steine Brighton
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TECH NICHE

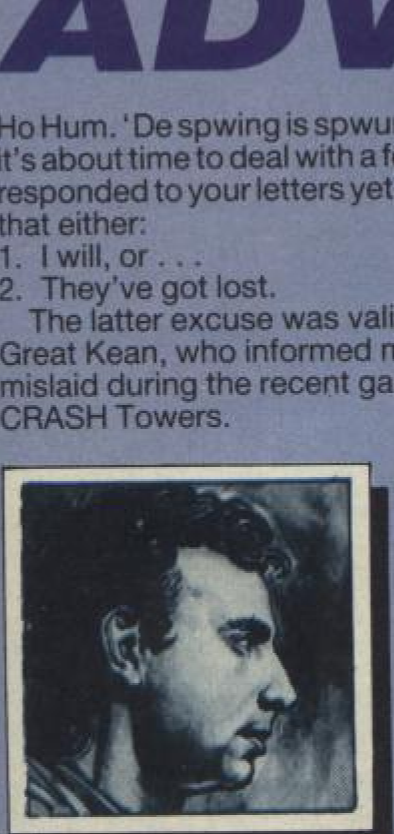
TECH NICHE

SOUND ADVICE

Ho Hum. 'De spwing is spwung, de gwass is wis . . . ' and it's about time to deal with a few of your letters. If I haven't responded to your letters yet, then it's a running possibility that either:

1. I will, or . . .
2. They've got lost.

The latter excuse was validated to some extent by the Great Kean, who informed me that some may have been mislaid during the recent game of musical desks at CRASH Towers.



Jon Bates answers his long neglected readers letters – and gets down to some serious interfacing in the process

Several people have written in with enquiries regarding the RAM/FLARE *Music Machine* (reviewed in Issue 34, November 1986). For those of you who have experienced difficulty in getting hold of the *Music Machine*, the address appears later on.

Most questions revolve around the interfacing of particular music products to hardware. If you've got anything specific like this to ask, then send me an SAE and I'll do my best to find out and reply to you. On a more general note, **Phil Gyford** from Essex wonders if he can connect his 128 and a RAM/FLARE *Music Machine* to the CHEETAH *MK5* keyboard. If so, how and what would be the result?

The Music Machine, which slots into the I/O port, is equipped with Midi 'In', 'Out', and 'Through.' To interface midi devices you need a midi cable – this is in fact a lead equipped with five-pin DIN plugs at each end, but unless you are heavily into a soldering iron, melted bits of plastic, and enjoy frustration, I would suggest that you buy one made up from a music or electronics store. If you connect 'Out' of the *MK5* to 'In' on the *Music Machine*, you should find that the notes played on the keyboard will sound from the *Music Machine* audio outputs. However, you must check that both the *MK5* and the *Music Machine* are set to the same midi channel, otherwise you won't get a peep out of it. By careful use of the *Music Machine* you can get it to play its own drums and also give whatever voice you have sampled. The drums themselves are samples, and by not throwing them away but over writing the built-in sampled synth with your own sample you can play this voice from the external midi controllers (in this case the *MK5*), and have the drums play their own pattern which you have cunningly written into the *Music Machine*. One slight flaw is that you can only play up to two notes simultaneously on the *Music Machine* from the *MK5*, or indeed any external midi device, so big chords are definitely out. The *MK5* itself will play as many notes simultaneously as the device it is connected to will allow. A cheaper way would be to use the *Mini Interface* from CHEETAH at £29.95 which would allow you to control the 128's internal sound chip, but with no sampling or drum facility. RAM/FLARE have threatened to expand on the *Music Machines*' software capabilities, especially with the 128 in mind. This should mean that different software coupled with the hardware could give you greater sampling facilities or greater drum facilities.

On the other hand, if you can stretch your budget you can pick up a good second-hand head with the CASIO *CZ101* which will respond to midi very intelligently indeed. The going rate seems to be about £175 for a model in reasonable nick. You can then have a *Music Machine*, controlled from the CASIO (or vice versa) and have endless fun as well as sampling, sequencing and drums. It rather depends whether you see yourself expanding the system. At just under £100, the *MK5* would be ideal if you are going to expand the system in the near future. However, I would think that a second-hand midi-equipped synth would be a good one-off purchase. If you couldn't afford the *Music Machine* immediately you could always try linking the synth and the 128 via the midi outlet on the 128. Details of how this is done are contained in CRASH No 28, May 1986. RAM/FLARE can be found at: ***Unit 16, Redfields Industrial Park, Redfield Lane, Church Crookham, Aldershot, Hants, GU13 0RE***.

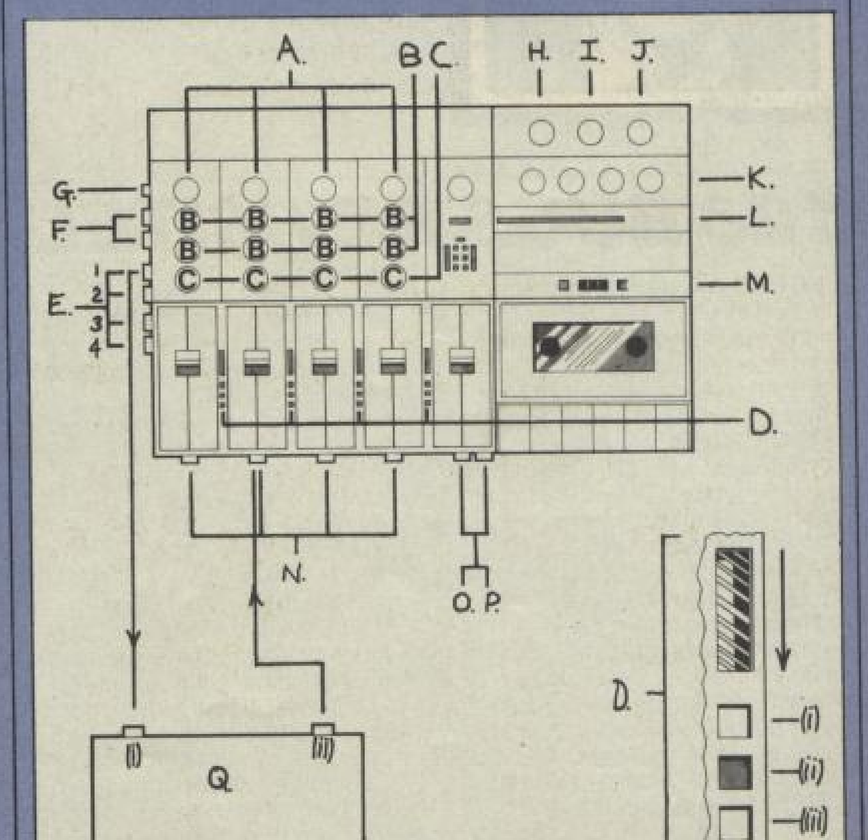
SOUND FX FOR CHEAPO MULTI-TRACKERS

Ernie Pollard from Liverpool has come up with an idea for inserting sound effects (known to the cognoscenti as FX) into your multi-track recording. These FX can of course be those created by Spectrum hardware such as the CHEETAH *Sound Sampler Utility* package.

His application is for a four-track cassette machine – it will also work on any machine that can 'bounce' sounds from one track to another, but owing to either its low cost or

KEY

- A. Input Gain Controls
- B. Parametrics (Treble/Bass)
- C. Panpot
- D. Selector Switch
  - i) tape
  - ii) off
  - iii) mic/line
- E. Tape Out (Tracks 1 to 4)
- F. Stereo Line Out
- G. DC16v In
- H. Lights
- I. DBX
- J. Power On
- K. Tape Cue
- L. Speed Control
- M. Tape Counter
- N. Mic/Line/Tape In
- O. Phones
- P. Punch In
- Q. Delay/FX
  - i) Line In (or Mic In)
  - ii) Line Out (or To Amp)



vast oversights by the design team, has not been provided with auxiliary insert points: as in a fair majority of the cassette multi-track machines.

Ernie rightfully points out that it is always best to record sounds where possible without reverb or delay, and then add it later when you have a rough idea of the near overall sound – thus avoiding overkill in any department.

Having done this, keep one track free for the FX and then:

1. Select the channel/instrument you want to add the FX to.
2. Take a phono lead from the Tape Out of that channel and feed it to the input of your FX, be it Spectrum or otherwise.
3. Take another lead from the output of the FX to the line input of the channel you have kept free.
4. Playback from the original channel but simultaneously record on the spare channel, selecting 'line in' to do so. Here I would recommend a few tries at this to get the volumes and EQ set correctly. It is never a good idea to have one gain control flat out and another only just on. Don't forget that the FX unit may have its own gain controls too. Keep an eye on the input levels on the channel to be recorded on as you won't want to overload it would you . . . it could be tres expensivo!
5. If all has gone to plan you should now have two tracks from the same source – one 'dry' and one with added FX.

If you are using an effect that doesn't allow you to hear the sound source mixed in with the processed sound, then 'bouncing' these two tracks together will give you the result in one – this would require careful forethought about the whole recording process though. Hopefully the diagram will help you to visualise the process. Happy multi-tracking, don't blow anything up! See you next month.

BRIGHT IDEA

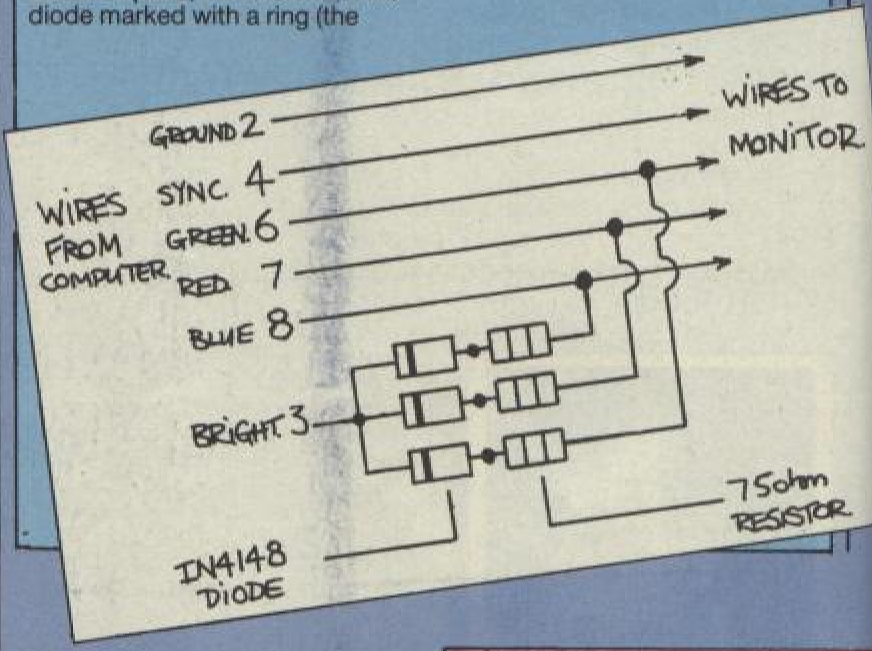
THE ORIGINAL black Spectrum 128 has an output for an RGB monitor, but unlike the Plus Two it uses a separate BRIGHT line which few monitors can accept.

Video guru **Chris Howland** has written in to explain how the BRIGHT signal can be combined with the Red, Green and Blue lines, so that BRIGHT character-squares appear correctly even if your monitor hasn't got a BRIGHT input.

You'll need three small signal diodes – the IN4148 is suitable, cheap and common – and three 75ohm resistors.

Connect the resistors and diodes in pairs, with the end of the diode marked with a ring (the cathode) on the far side from the resistor. Connect all the cathodes to the BRIGHT output from the computer (pin 3), and connect the loose ends of the resistors to the Green, Red and Blue outputs (pins 6, 7 and 8). It doesn't matter which way round the resistors are connected, but it's vital to get the diodes the right way round, as shown in the diagram.

Chris has tested this circuit on Ferguson MC01 and MC05 monitors, and it should work just as well with other RGB linear displays. It won't work with RGB TTL monitors, which are limited to eight colours.



TECH TIPS



SIMON GOODWIN returns with news of a program designed to make playing tips a thing of the past: an automatic infinite-lives POKE generator! PLUS help and advice for owners of 128s, Discovery disks, Microdrives and Snapshots . . .

128 BUGS REVISITED

I'VE HAD two more letters about the bug in 128 BASIC which I mentioned in April's CRASH. In some circumstances comparisons are reordered – for instance, IF Z>B-1 would become IF ZB>-1 ! As far as I know this bug is in all Spectrum 128 ROMs. In my last column I suggested you could get past the problem by putting brackets round the right-hand part of the comparison; but that's not the only answer, it seems.

Paul Carrig found the fault independently, and came up with an ingenious but rather long-winded solution. First he typed SPECTRUM to get his program into 48K BASIC, where the bug does not exist. Then he entered the tricky line, saved the result, and reloaded the file into 128 BASIC.

Ian Tomey has a simpler solution – he says all is well if you type a space after the comparison symbol.

A similar trick is needed to enter cursor-control lines like this:

```
LET X=X+(DX AND
INKEY$="8")-(DX AND
INKEY$="5")
```

If you type that into a 128 as written, the computer will mistakenly indicate an error after the first closing bracket. But if you put a space before that bracket, it works!

These bugs in the 128's Editor ROM aren't serious, but they can be irritating till you know how to get round them.

PLUS TWO ADD-ON CASSETTE

MIKE HYAMS has found a neat way of wiring up an external cassette recorder to his Plus Two without drilling a hole in the case and thus invalidating the guarantee.

Mike removed the rubber foot from the base of the computer, under the built-in tape drive, and fitted an earphone socket in its place. He routed signals to the socket from the built-in cassette, as I explained in the December 1985 CRASH.

It's not in an ideal position, but the extra socket is only needed to load old, badly-behaved tapes, so it's not too inconvenient.

And if anything goes wrong, as long as it's not caused by his modification he can just remove the socket, replace the foot and return the computer for repair under warranty. When the guarantee runs out he'll move the socket to a more accessible position on the side of the computer box.

TECHIES C

DAMIAN SCATTERGOOD has written in asking where he can get hold of the *128 Technical Guide*. That was the grand title of a 23-page photocopied memo produced for software houses by Andrew Cummins, of Sinclair's defunct Technical Support department.

Amstrad (tel: 0277 228888) now own the rights to the *Guide*, so they're the only people I can suggest as a source. Much of the information therein, and lots besides, has appeared in the Plus Two manual and past TECH TIPS columns – so you may find the *Guide* a bit of a disappointment when you get hold of a copy.

Richard Welsh is one of several readers writing in for more information about the internal workings of the Plus Two. He wants to know if the keypad socket could be used as an extra interface, perhaps for a joystick.

The keypad circuit is rather strange, and relies on special electronics inside the pad. I'm not sure whether Sinclair did this to reduce the number of wires needed for the link, to allow for future expansion, or just to keep the market for keypads to

DISK DILEMMAS

KEITH THORNTON read Dominic's recent review of the RAM PRINT interface, and wants to know if it'll work with disk systems. RAM Electronics say it's compatible with Microdrives and the Opus Discovery disk drive; and they say they'll make every effort to get it to work with the Spectrum Plus Three when it turns up.

As I write, in early May, a few Plus Threes have apparently made their way to software houses, accompanied by secrecy agreements – Alan Sugar might have learned a lesson from the Iron Lady herself.

Still, a public launch appears imminent; W H Smith seem to be clearing out their stocks of Plus Twos in preparation.

Personally, I find the idea of a Spectrum with a standard, built-in three-inch disk appealing, but rather risky for the trade. I can't see software houses being very keen on the machine if Amstrad include a snapshot button to save games on disk – they've already been damaged by piracy on Amstrad's earlier home machines. Disks make life very, very easy for pirates. That said, the Plus Three certainly won't take off unless we can use the drive to save games.

Time will tell. I hope to have more to say about the Plus Three – and the prospects for a Plus Four – next month.

A few hearts must have missed a beat when Opus, maker of the Discovery disk system, stopped trading. But it looks as if the machine will still be supported; a marketing company has picked up the stocks of interfaces, and I've just received a copy of the first newsletter of the Spectrum Discovery Club, an independent user group which publishes material on disk and paper.

The spelling is a bit erratic, but the information is interesting. There's lots about program-transfer techniques, and instructions on how to connect extra drives and bump the capacity of an 80-track disk to 718K. For details and a free copy of the newsletter, send an SAE to **Peter Lilley** at *8 Raynham Crescent, Keighley, West Yorkshire BD21 2TP.*

HEAVY READING

IF YOU'VE GOT a keypad and you're feeling keen, you can read its 18 keys using a machine-code routine in the 128 Editor ROM. You can't call the code from BASIC, unfortunately, as you must page out the ZX BASIC ROM to gain access to the Editor. The following explanation is a bit esoteric, but I hope it'll satisfy the techies!

The first step is to disable interrupts. Then swap ROMs by clearing bit 4 on port 32765; you can get the value of the other bits from BANKM, at address 23388. Bit 3 selects between the two screen RAM banks, and bit 5 controls the hardware 'lock' that makes it impossible to get into the 128's memory when you're using the computer in 48K mode. Bits 0, 1 and 2 select which of the eight RAM pages appears in the top 16K, as I explained last year.

A call to address 280 will return with the zero flag reset if something's wrong – eg if there's no keypad or too many keys are depressed. Otherwise the value in the E register tells you what's going on. 128 indicates no key, values from 91 to 107 correspond to unshifted keys, and 108 to 125 indicate that the O/SHIFT key is depressed (ahh!), with or without another key.

Remember to restore the ZX BASIC ROM, and to then turn interrupts back on, when you've finished reading the pad.

Other useful routines in the 128 ROM are at 286, to write a character to the MIDI port, and at 295, to send one to the RS-232. Both require that interrupts are disabled, and send the character in the A register.

You can read the RS-232 by calling 289, again in the Editor ROM. If a character is received the carry flag will be set on return and the character-code will be in A.

VOLEX UPDATE

IT'S BAD NEWS, I'm afraid. The Volex TTS2000S teletext adapter is only compatible with the bog-standard 48K Spectrum. It won't work with the Discovery disk or the Spectrum 128, though it can drive a ZX Printer. Thanks to **N H Oughton** for this information.

S' CORNER

themselves. The last explanation seems the most likely, as the *128 Technical Guide* deliberately avoids describing the circuit.

The *Guide* says this about the keypad: 'It connects to the Spectrum 128 over a special bidirectional link, using a protocol which due to its complexity (and likely changing nature) we will not document.' It seems that the pad behaves as a 5x4 matrix internally, but it's not easy to read it.

I'd be fascinated to hear from any reader who's worked out what's going on, or found an application for the socket, but I'm not very hopeful. The keypad itself is no longer available, though most of its functions can be obtained using combinations of normal keys, as I've explained in past columns.

You could wire the socket as an instant interface for joysticks, using the connection points I listed in the December 1985 CRASH, but you'd have to disconnect all the existing wires and replace them with connections to the keyboard matrix; you'd get little more than a conveniently-placed nonstandard socket.

MICRODRIVE REVIVAL

MICRODRIVE owners may be interested in a suggestion from **F Bieling** – a simple but delicate operation which apparently yields an extra 2-3K on most tapes, and often restores the performance of ones that seemed worn out.

F Bieling says old or tired cartridges can often be brought back to life by retensioning the little copper spring that holds the tape against the microdrive head. The spring is compressed when you insert and remove cartridges, and problems crop up when it won't hold the tape firmly in place.

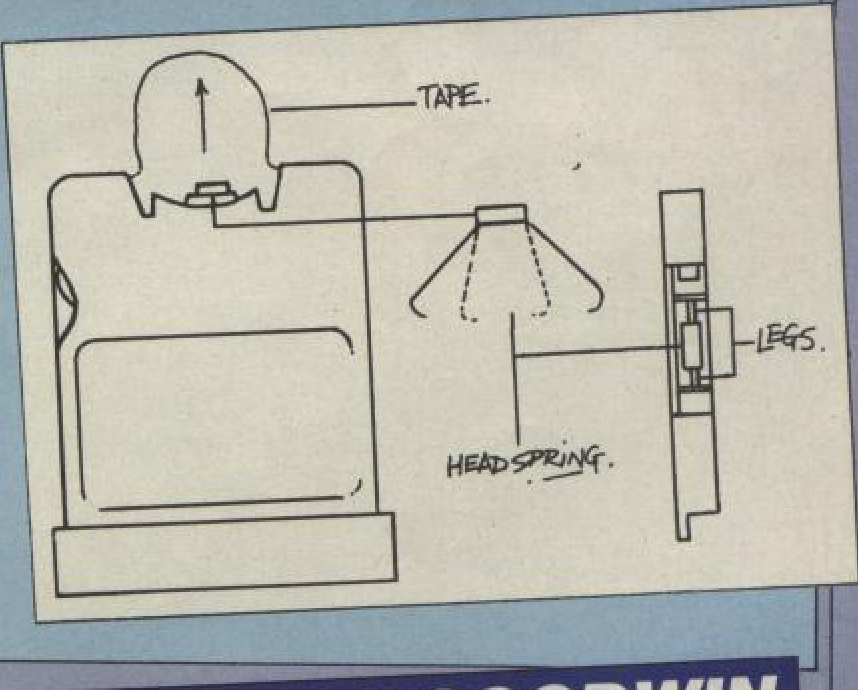
Use a pencil or a small unmagnetised screwdriver to pull a two-centimetre loop of tape from the cartridge. Reach past the loop, very carefully, and loosen the spring by unhooking one end from the plastic moulding. Don't just put a screwdriver in the middle and jerk it, or you'll probably break the spring.

Before you release the other end of the spring you should move the loose end outside the cartridge, as shown in the diagram. This makes it easier to remove the whole spring, by moving it gently toward the end that's still clipped in.

Bend the spring legs toward each other, as shown, to restore the spring's power.

And, as they always say in repair manuals, reassembly is the reverse of the above procedure!

Once the spring is back in place you must push the loop of tape back into the cartridge, without touching it with your fingers, and format the cartridge once to let it run in. I wouldn't advise you to try anything so drastic on a tape containing valuable information, but this technique may be worth a go if one of your cartridges takes early retirement.



WILL THE REAL SIMON GOODWIN PLEASE STAND UP?

IN LAST MONTH'S SIGNPOST, **S J Harding** was whingeing about a letter from Simon Goodwin of Beyond – a name that he said 'sounds familiar'. Well, it's not me!

It seems there are at least three Simon Goodwins scribbling away these days. Most of the stuff under this name IS by me, because I've been programming, broadcasting and writing fairly single-mindedly since 1979.

But the one who worked for Beyond, and *C&VG* before that, is Simon P Goodwin.

And every so often I get blamed for Amstrad programs that appear in *Popular Computing Weekly*, but it's not my fault, honestly – it's yet another Simon Goodwin.

As far as I know, I'm the only one who writes about Sinclair computers. So if you're called Simon Goodwin too, I'd advise you to change your name now, or pick a different hobby!

THE GAMESTER – LLOYD MANGRAM IN SOFTWARE?

THIS MONTH I'm reviewing one of the strangest programs we've ever received: a utility intended to automatically give the player infinite lives 'on most types of games'! It comes with a list of 23 games – all recent hits – which the author has tested and found compatible; I've tried it on several other titles, with mixed but intriguing results. *The Gamester* is, as the author says, 'totally original and quite unique'.

The Gamester is set up much like *Genie*, the £9.95 pop-up disassembler I reviewed in January. It's a small machine-code program that loads into the add-on RAM of Romantic Robot's backup interface, Multiface 1. This means that you can use it without encroaching upon the 48K used for normal programs, and can call it at any time, whatever else the computer is doing, by pressing the red button on the Multiface.

The Gamester takes less than a minute to load from cassette; the computer then appears to reset itself, as if you'd just turned it on, and you can load games or other programs as normal. When you press the magic button a menu appears at the top of the screen. The menu indicates the amount of disk, tape or wafer space that's needed to save the program now in memory, and invites you to press one of five keys.

Pressing R resets the computer, leaving *The Gamester* set up, so you can load a different game. Keys 1 to 4 tell *The Gamester* to search quickly through the loaded program, finding and modifying groups of instructions that look as if they keep track of the player's lives.

The four options correspond to different groups of instructions; the author tells you which to choose for each of the 23 games on his list, but for other titles you must resort to trial and error.

Once you've selected an appropriate option the normal Multiface menu appears, and you can restart, save programs or screens or make manual alterations to the code as if *The Gamester* weren't loaded. You mustn't use the WINDOW memory-display option, however, or *The Gamester*'s code will be overwritten.

I tried *The Gamester* on a couple of games from the supplied list. *Uridium* was patched for infinite lives with no trouble, but *The Gamester* seemed to corrupt other parts of the code of *Jack The Nipper*; the lower part of the screen filled with sprite components after I lost my first life, though play continued with infinite lives in the top area.

Having loaded *Wizard's Lair*, a program not on the list, I found that *The Gamester* could alter the game but could *not* give me infinite lives. One option caused all the sprites to move back and forth along fixed diagonals; another stopped the animation.

At this point I realised one major fault of *The Gamester* from the point of view of humble cassette-users such as myself – you spend a lot of time loading and reloading programs. If you don't find the right option at first, you must reload the program to be patched. You may have to try all four options – and you've no guarantee that any of them will work.

I switched to 16K programs at this point, to save time and try *The Gamester* on a range of old titles. *JetPac* and *Pssst* were patched perfectly, using Option One, but I couldn't get quite what I wanted on other games.

Option One gave a continuous explosion effect in *Deathchase*, so my first accurate shot was also my last. Option Two gave infinite lives, but also made the other bikes run away faster than any player could chase them – it was impossible to get within range!

I was interested to see what *The Gamester* would do to *Earth Defence* – a missile-command variant which doesn't really use the normal idea of 'lives'. *The Gamester* zapped it so play didn't continue after the first screen. Using it on *Meteor Attack* I ended up with only one life, rather than the original three.

An interesting toy

At a guess, *The Gamester* works by searching for indirect decrement instructions followed by tests for zero. This is a good rule to start out with when hacking programs by hand, but it's too crude to give reliable results.

Frankly, I'm amazed it works as well as it does, and author **D R Walton** deserves credit for persevering in an area where most programmers would give up after a few minutes!

As it stands, *The Gamester* is more of a toy than a utility, though it may be worth having if you've got several games on the author's list. It costs £5 from **D R Walton**, *115 Wash Lane, South Yardley, Birmingham B25 8PX.*

CANDID SNAPSHOTS

QUITE A FEW of you have written in about the Datel Snapshot, which I tested (with very little success) in the Christmas CRASH. Opinions are mixed: some people find it works okay, others criticise the sloppy design (and Datel's claim that it will copy all games), and some users find it almost completely useless.

It's probably a design fault that makes Snapshot incompatible with certain Spectrums, even though those computers work fine with other press-button copiers. Datel haven't responded to our offer to test a replacement unit, so I assume the flaws haven't been corrected.

The good news is that **Ambrose Clarke** has written in with a totally new application for the Snapshot which *does* seem to work on all machines – and offers lots of scope for hackers.

He's written a tiny machine-code program which copies the first 8K of Spectrum ROM into Snapshot RAM, so you can customise BASIC. (For this Ambrose wins £20 worth of software of his choice.)

All you need to do is plug in a Snapshot 2 and RUN his program. You can bring back the old ROM at any time with OUT 127,66. To bring in the RAM, type OUT 127,67. Ambrose suggests a few changes, such as POKE 8020,55 : POKE 8021,201 to disable BREAK in a program, and POKE 1524,0 to stop BREAK while loading.

I was more interested in playing around with the timing values used in the cassette routines. It only takes one POKE to speed up loading, though four are needed to SAVE files at turbo speed.

The value at address 1427 is normally 203. Subtract 8 from this for Decathalon-speed loading – about 20 per cent faster than normal, without the unreliable modified header that Ocean used. Subtract 14 (giving 189) to load files in two thirds of the normal time. An adjustment factor of 21 gives megafast double-speed loading, but you may find this unreliable.

These 'fastloads' will only work if the corresponding file was saved at high speed. You need four POKEs to adjust the speed of SAVEing – adjust the values at 1272, 1305, 1311 and 1326. Subtract 12 from all four locations for 20 per cent extra speed; – 21 gives two-thirds loading time; –32 gives double speed.

```
100  CLEAR 29999 :
     RESTORE : T=0
110  FOR N=30000 TO
     30026 : READ A
120  POKE N,A : LET T=T+
     A : NEXT N
130  IF T<>1916
     THEN PRINT
     "Check DATA." :
     STOP
140  LET L=USR (30000)
150  DATA 33,0,0,17,0,128,
     1,0,32,237,176,62,67,2
     11
160  DATA 127,33,0,128,17,
     0,0,1,0,32,237,176,201
```

Ambrose Clarke's routine to allow SNAPSHOT owners to make temporary changes to ZX BASIC

MICRODRIVE STOP PRESS!

I'VE JUST HEARD that the design of the microdrive head spring is about to change. Apparently Ablex, the firm that made the cartridges for Sinclair, has collaborated with ICL to design a new, tougher spring for the tapes. ICL uses Sinclair cartridges in their One-Per-Desk QL/telephone combination system.

COMING SOON – JULY TIPS

AMONG OTHER GOODIES, next month's column should include routines to convert samples and drum files between Cheetah add-ons and the RAM Music Machine. I've had several letters asking for these; they were originally planned to appear in the April CRASH.

TECH TIPS is a two-way column. If you've got an idea or a question, please write in; but check whether or not I've answered your question in a past column, and please don't ask me to write programs just for you. There are a lot of you, and only one of me!

Please don't send SAEs – there are so many letters every month that I can't promise to reply personally. I respond to as many letters as possible in each month's column, and there's a prize of £20 worth of software of your choice each month for the reader who sends in the best tip. The address to write to is: **Simon Goodwin, TECH TIPS, CRASH,** *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*



This superb arcade game is based on the popular multiple-choice adventure series by Mark Smith and Jamie Thomson, published by Sphere Books. Set in 3033 AD you are a special agent, codename **FALCON,** and your mission is to halt the tracks of a renegade Time Lord who is threatening to disrupt future history by his ruthless meddling in the past. Your time machine "**Falcon's Wing**" takes you in your quest to ensure the timelines of the future remain uncorrupted!

Please send me **FALCON:** The Renegade Lord

Commodore **64/128** ☐ Spectrum **48/128** ☐

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to **Virgin Games** and crossed

Total £____________________

(Please do *not* post coins or notes.)

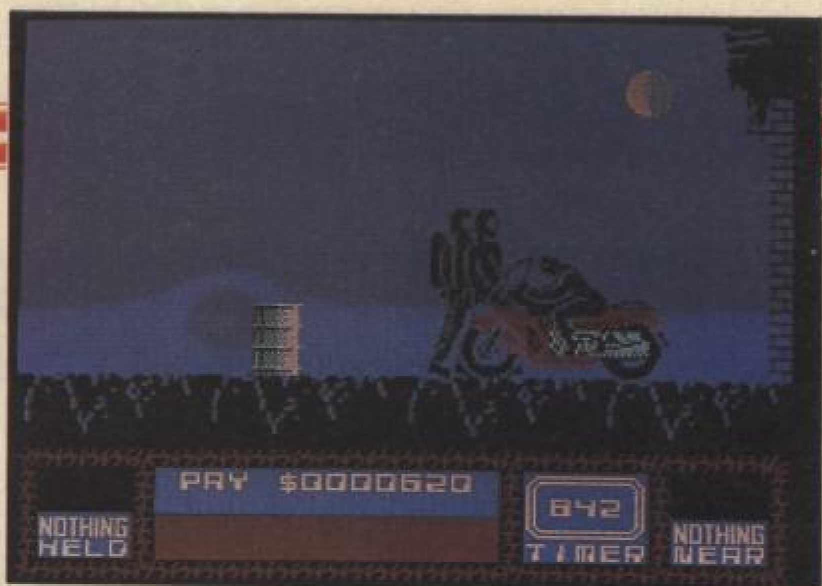
Name____________________

Address____________________

____________________ **Postcode**__________

Virgin Games, 2/4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2DX

SABOTEUR II



▶ On yer bike Joan! It's the Avenging Angel herself, about to be accosted by nasty androids.

Producer: Durell
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Clive Townsend**

Central security of the Dictator's mountain hideout was breached and details of his missile systems stolen in Saboteur 1. With the Ninja warrior who undertook that mission now dead, his sister continues the work, using the newly acquired information to alter the missile's target.

To do that our Ninjette must first enter the headquarters, which are protected by androids and pumas, by choosing her moment to drop from a hang-glider. There she finds an armoury, missile silo, offices, lifts and underdeveloped open areas. Inside the complex she can run left and right, jump up, drop down, or use ladders to reach other levels, while avoiding vampire bats in the lower levels.

Although android guards carry throwing knives and flame throwers, with each programmed in unarmed combat, they can be evaded and their weapons avoided by leaping or reaching areas where they do not follow. Androids and pumas can be killed, by punching, high kicking and flinging objects, (a martial arts throwing weapon is initially carried), but their great strength generally requires several lethal blows to be delivered very accurately. For every blow landed and opponent killed, money is earned.

No energy is consumed by running or climbing, but puma bites, burns, drowning, falls and contact with guard's weapons reduces our heroine's reserves. This can be replenished by standing quietly in screens where all guards have been killed, or do not follow, but not by waiting on ladders.

As progress is made through the 700 or so flick screens, supply crates containing objects, such as pieces of pipe, spanners, knives and some items not immediately identifiable are discovered. Crates can be searched – a stash searched message appears when this is complete – with their contents successively displayed in the 'near' box at the screen's base. When there, they can be transfered to the 'held' box and subsequently hurled at attackers. Only one object can be held at a time.

Computer tape may be contained within supply boxes, and when sufficient has been collected, it can be used to redirect the missile. At higher skill levels the terminal next to the missile can only be operated when extra sections of computer tape have been collected. When acquired computer tape pieces are displayed at the bottom of the screen. Other computer terminals control lifts and the electrified perimeter fence.

Once the missile's flight has been altered, survival depends on escaping by motorbike, along the single exit from the mountain – the tunnel protected by electrified fences – before missile launch. A clock shows time remaining until ignition.

Once a mission's been successfully completed, the next game level, with its separate mission objectives, can be started.

BEN

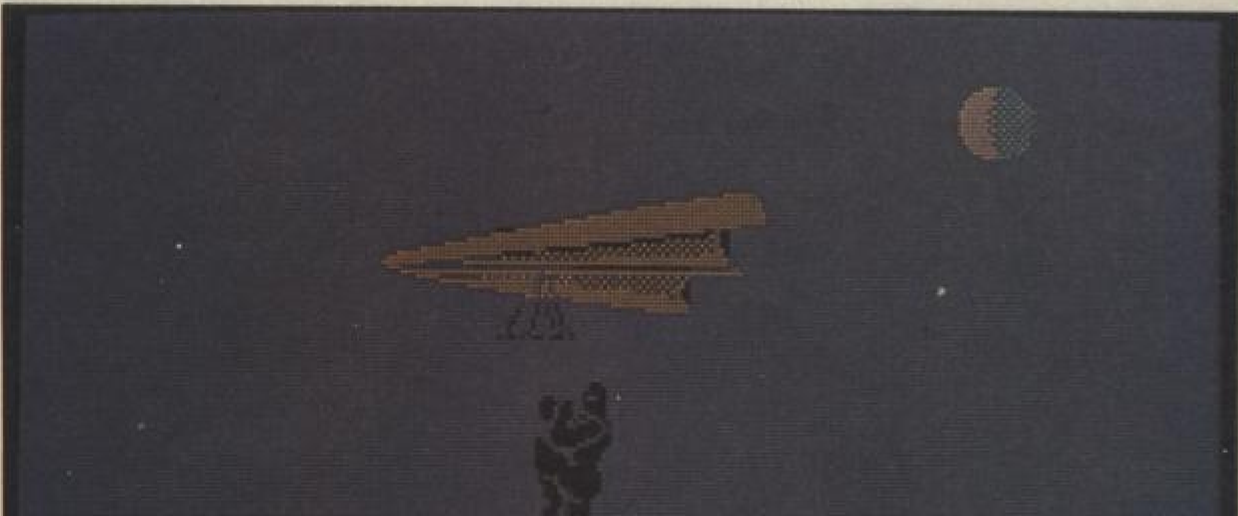
" Considering the time that Durell have had to develop Saboteur II **it isn't a step on from its predecessor, more of a lateral move really. Having said this, it isn't a bad game, and it's sure to keep** Saboteur **fans happy for ages. There are a lot of screens and the guards are tough, so overall it's a very hard game to play – but it is rewarding when you find the first piece of tape, or the bike. The jerky graphics can be annoying at times, but they're generally bearable. 48K sound is reasonable, with a title tune and some worthy effects during the game; the 128K version has the same effects but is graced with a great tune. "**

PAUL

" No surprises here, folks, the basic concept is very similar to the first game. Graphically, it's exactly the same, but contains many more features; flame throwers, hang gliders etc. The animation is superb – especially that of the pumas, and I like the idea of the player controlling a women leaping about – it makes little difference really, but I'm sure lady players will find it appealing. Overall, Saboteur II **is a much more challenging game than the first, with more obstacles and many more rooms. A superb follow-up with great depth of content. "**

GARETH

" Saboteur II **is as appealing as its predecessor. I had many hours of fun playing the original – this follow up has all its qualities and lots more. Screen layouts are pretty much the same, and so's the sound; which may imply that it's a copy rather than a continuation. Not at all! Playability has increased greatly, with keyboard response being improved. You might get a little bored with the same aspects of play, but although** Saboteur II **is slightly expensive, it's well worth having as a follow up. "**



COMMENTS

Control keys: A/Z up/down, N/M left/right, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: strong and clean
Graphics: large, nicely defined characters, tendency to flicker
Sound: good tune and spot FX
Skill levels: one; codes for other 13
Screens: over 700
General rating: Involving and challenging beat 'em up which successfully incorporates its adventure elements.

Presentation	84%
Graphics	83%
Playability	86%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	78%
Overall	83%

Reviews

THE ASTONISHING ADVENTURES OF
MR WEEMS
AND THE SHE VAMPIRES



Producer: Piranha
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Ram Jam**

Vampire hunting isn't everyone's idea of a hobby, but Mr Weems thinks that it's a pretty good way of passing the time. With this in mind he sets out to kill the Great She Vampire.

Having entered her Mansion, Mr Weems discovers that it's a six-level, flick screen complex of corridors and rooms with locked doors. Collected keys unlock them, but there are hidden doors as well, and magic transporter blocks.

On each level Weems encounters bat-infested coffins and pots, lumbering, but stupid Frankenstein monsters, and menacing she vampires with street smarts. If they bump him in the night, they give Weems anaemia. Should his blood count ever fall to zero he succumbs to death, but Weems can turn vampire himself and replenish his blood levels by picking up the blood bottles he finds on his adventure. He can also pop a smart-garlic pill to give himself a short-term immunity to others' bloodsucking attentions.

Not content with merely smelling like a French chef, Weems also totes a garlic-firing gun with almost limitless cloves; there are garlic bombs to be picked up en route to. When used, these remove offending creeps from the show, but are ineffective when the ultimate level is reached. Points are awarded for each creature creamed, and when when all bloodsuckers have been removed from each room, coffins can be destroyed, a point being given for every one blasted.

On reaching the ultimate level, our be-garlicked vampire enthusiast finds the Great She Vampire's penthouse lair. There he can kill her at his leisure, but only if he has acquired the secret weapons – a stake, a mallet, a mega-garlic piece, a mirror and crucifix – contained within boxes on each of the levels. Once collected these are shown on screen.

If he manages to despatch the Great She Vampire, Weems must make like Seb Coe and leave the vampire-ridden Mansion before her enraged minions can seek him out – but if that's what you like doing for a hobby, Bon Apetit.

PAUL

" I found Mr Weems **to be a most enjoyable game. Its only flaw being the graphics. Due to the high amount of detail used, they very easily appear messy on the screen – often quite indistinguishable. Colour is well used however, despite being mainly monochromatic, and the flick screen idea is a sensible choice, as a scrolling play area would have ruined it. Nonetheless,** Mr Weems **is fun to play, even though it's another on the well-worn** Gauntlet **path. Asking the full wack for a re-hash of an older game puts its value for money down quite a bit. "**

BEN

" I was a little surprised to see this in the In Tray, as there has been none of the usual Piranha hype surrounding. Despite strong Gauntlet **overtones (which I've seen all too often recently),** Mr Weems **proves to be a playable game, marred only by its difficulty and less than slick presentation. Along with most** Gauntletes**que games the graphics can get messy, and confusing when there's a lot happening on screen. This does effect gameplay somewhat if you're playing on a colour TV (but then again, turning the colour down at times of panic shouldn't be too much of a strain) . . . "**

MIKE

" Here's a pleasant enough Gauntlet **derivative. The graphics are fine; though the bespectacled Weems looks out of place in a game that seems to demand warriors and wizards. Ho hum. As far as playability goes, there's a good bit there, but I'm afraid lastability is limited – I got a bit bored after only the second level. This, in a game costing as much as** Mr Weems, **is too little playing time. Overpriced, but a fun play. "**



JACKLE AND WIDE

Producer: Bulldog
Retail Price: **£1.99**

After years of research, Dr Jackle perfects the ever-lasting youth potion which he has long sought. However, on downing the mysterious brew he's transformed into his evil alter ego, Mr Wide. Foolishly Jackle produced no antidote before this metamorphosis. So, the secret laboratory of Dr Piqued (a rival scientist who may have formulated a remedy) must be found and entered if Jackle is ever to feel himself again.

In this arcade adventure, Wide cycles through Hyde Park before entering the sewer maze which hides Piqued's lab. A bird's-eye view is given of the park with the screen scrolling vertically to reveal pathways in the four usual directions.

In the park, our hero discovers useful objects, such as a double-headed axe, a sea-sickness pill, some vanishing herbs and sparkling gems – four of which can be carried at any one time. They assist Wide in solving riddles which take him further towards Piqued's hideaway. An on-screen message gives hints (can you swim?, go left) and identifies any acquired item, with an inventory of carried objects available when required.

Onc below, Wide abandons his bike and tip-toes through a labyrinth of sewer rooms. Some rooms quickly diminish Wide's energy, whilst others are full of gas which increases the time countdown against which the game is played, yet more fill with rising water. Hasty exits can be made through doorways.

Creatures fatal to the touch lurk in some sewers, while others merely reduce Wide's energy level which must never reach zero. The rate of energy loss is diminished if Wide carries appropriate objects (for instance, the sea-sickness pill counteracts rising water). Energy reserves are topped up by firing at the 'intelligent spike'.

The park can be revisited from certain sections of the sewer. However, once left, the scientific scoundrel cannot return through the same entrance. On re-entry, Wide receives a full complement of energy.



► **Seen from above on his Penny-Farthing, Wide prowls the pathways of Hyde Park looking for an underground entrance.**



► **Underground at last! The corpulently evil Wide seeks his kinder alter ego in the sewers.**

CRITICISM

● **" I was beginning to think that Bulldog would be one of the most notable budget software houses around,** Feud **was an excellent start and** Colony **had quite a few good points. However,** Jackle and Wide **is disappointing in comparison. The basic plot of 'find an object so you can complete a sub-game' has been used to its limit by now and should really be forgotten. The underground sequence looks good but plays badly and the Hyde Park section is very primitive indeed. Uninteresting and at times tedious so lasting appeal is very limited. "**

BEN

● *" I spent most of the time with* Jackle and Wide *wandering about, trying to work out exactly what I was supposed to be doing. However, during this ramble I did notice that the screens were nearly all the same – in fact all aspects of the graphics are appalling. Also, a little sound would have gone a long way towards making play more enjoyable. I will give some credit though, the game is original, but perhaps you can't expect a great deal for a budget price. "*

GARETH

● " The instructions are vague and unhelpful. However, I found the gameplay to be very simple, and spent my time wishing that there was more to it. Graphically, the program ranges from colourful and distinct characters to plain and unimaginative backgrounds. Despite the strong story line, *Jackle and Wide* involves little more than trudging around and getting very bored. "

PAUL

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, Symbol Shift to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: rather varied; often excellent, sometimes dull
Graphics: busy scrolling backgrounds and reasonable sized sprites
Sound: poor
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling park area, nine sewers and the final chamber
General rating: A good, and often original idea falls into a sadly clichéd game lacking content.

Presentation	51%
Graphics	50%
Playability	38%
Addictive qualities	38%
Value for money	47%
Overall	**41%**



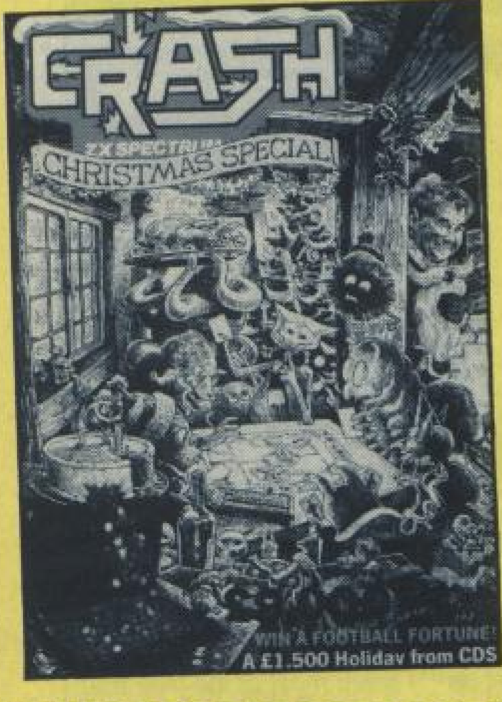
COMMENTS

Control keys: definable, up/down, left/right, smart-garlic and garlic bomb needed
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: very bright surrounds to a largely monochromatic playing area
Graphics: often extremely busy and sometimes confusing
Sound: above average
Skill levels: one
Screens: six levels of flick screens
General rating: Effective enter and destroy game of reasonable addictivity, slightly spoiled by over-busy graphics.

Presentation	59%
Graphics	63%
Playability	67%
Addictive qualities	62%
Value for money	57%
Overall	**64%**

BACKNUMBERS

No 36: Xmas 1986/1987
*Another dose of traditionally festive fun, this year accompanied by Issue 0 of **LM** and containing a peek behind the scenes in Grovel Hill, where they make the magazine that bears Lloyd's initials. Lloyd himself looks back over 1986 giving a resume of the games we all played. Mel Croucher begins the saga of TAMARA KNIGHT: Part One of the tale of a fast-food salesbeing of the future is accompanied by Part Two. Simon Goodwin finds that it isn't just Spectrum owners who are playing Spectrum games . . . Apart from the usual regular features, we talked to the DENTON DESIGNERS and found out about the split, reviewed Kat Trap, the GENESIS game and looked at musical add-ons. Not forgetting the definitive CRASH Index for 1986 and the NEWSFIELD Reviewers' Challenge . . .*
Maps included *Infiltrator*, Level One of *Scooby Doo*, all of *Heartland*, *The Great Escape*, and *Druid*.



No 37: February 1987
The man behind JETMAN is interviewed and reveals a few of his dark secrets, and we reveal the dark secrets of the trio of reviewers chained up in the CRASH Dungeon. TAMARA KNIGHT continues her adventures, as does Franco Frey in the world of Video Digitisers. The full match report on the Match Day Challenge is given, in which we tell how one of the programmers responsible for the classic game ended up 'sick as a parrot'. Games mapped in February included part of *Fairlight II*, all of *Firelord*, *Avenger* and *Dandy*.

You might be lucky and win an entire set of CRASH from Issue One onwards in this month's competition on page 142. On the other hand, you might not, and you wouldn't want to miss out on anything, would you?

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Despite warnings in last month's CRASH, Guru Denise tells us that some fiendishly intractable persons still haven't taken out annual subscriptions (despite it's being virtually compulsory). Last month she was merely upset, this month the Subscription Queen is white with fury (and Hell hath no fury like a woman's love scorned etc, etc).

But we prevailed in calming her down by getting her to play some games with Spectravideo's 'Joyball' controller. So here's the deal: You take out a year's subscription to CRASH (12 issues post included) for a mere paltry £15 (£22 if you live outside the UK), and forgiving Denise will send you, ABSOLUTELY FREE, a Spectravideo 'Joyball' controller worth almost £20. Can't say fairer than that – except that existing subscribers get a chance of a cheapo deal on the controller as well . . . read on . . .

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DEAR GURU DENISE

This is simply incredible! Once again you've over-extended yourself on my pitifully crawling form. How can I ever repay you, O Guru Denise? Well, okay, in that case I'll just enclose my cheque/postal order for £15 (£22 outside Mainland UK) made out to **NEWSFIELD LTD**, for 12 issues of CRASH, and await my free Spectravideo 'Joyball' Controller, which I understand is in stock and just ready to go.

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Reviews

LIVINGSTONE I PRESUME

Producer: Alligata
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Operasoft**

Back to Victorian days when the Queen never smiled and Stanley had lost Livingstone.

In an attempt to discover him Stanley sets out into 63 flick screens of the African jungle after the good doctor. Moving left, right, ducking and jumping from platform to platform, Stanley's task is to solve problems, for instance, switches open barriers, but cannot obviously be reached. Hidden exits once discovered allow him to move on to the next level.

Diminishing energy can be replenished in time-honoured tradition by picking up the food and drink he finds on his travels. Zero energy causes the unsung explorer to lose one of his his lives.

On his quest our hero must battle past, or avoid a crop of man-eating plants, slithering snakes, dart-puffing pygmies, watching eyes, coconut-chucking monkies, quicksands, bullets, canibals, alligators, scorpions and tumbles into deep mine workings. Should he fall foul of any of these a life is lost. As an added problem Stanley finds that a flapping sea eagle is out to get him.

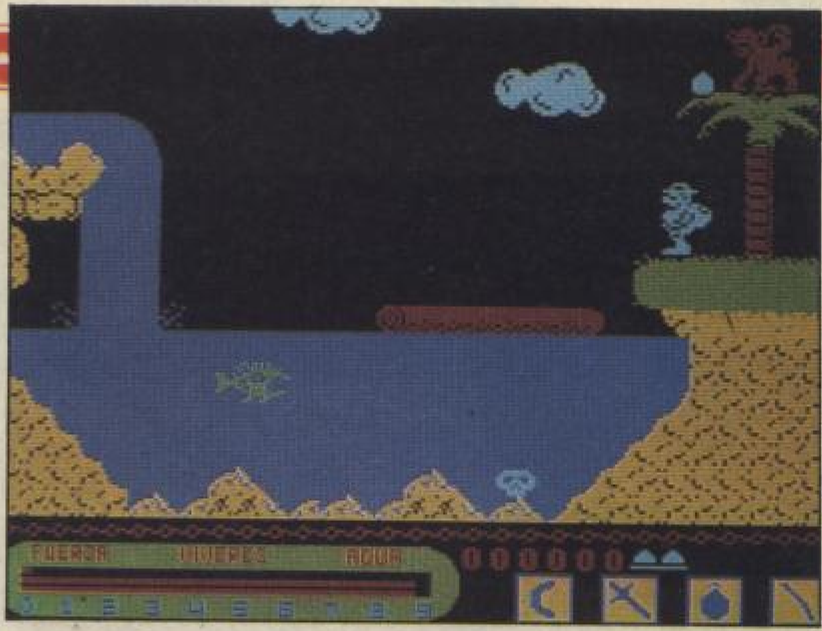
For protection and help the intrepid Victorian carries a boomerang, daggers, and grenades, which must be used with care if he is not to self-destruct. Additionally he owns a vaulting pole to help him reach higher platforms. The strength with which weapons can be hurled or vaults made is regulated using Space,

RICKY

" The ideas within Livingstone **are an enjoyable combination of old and new – it takes the platform game a bit further with the addition of four different weapons. Most screens present a 'Now, how do I get out of that?' problem, but they aren't frustrating, and can be most rewarding when completed. The graphics appear to suit the action well and generally it adds up to an pleasant little game that should keep a good chunk of spectrum owners amused for some time. "**

BEN

" I haven't seen a game in this genre for ages – it certainly makes a change from all the usual stuff and no mistake. The plot's fairly simple once the phrase book English on the inlay has been deciphered (Livingstone **is a Spanish game), as is the gameplay once you've worked out the behaviour of your weapons. The presentation, graphics and sound are all well above average so this isn't a bad buy at all, although I'm not too sure it will keep most people playing for very long. "**



▶ **One of the 63 flick screens of** Livingstone**, with heroic Stanley in search of the good Doctor.**

PAUL

" What a pleasant surprise Livingstone **is. The graphics totally suit the scenario, and there are many different colours and some VERY attractive bits of animation. The screen is set out superbly – you would expect loads of colour clashes, but in fact they're disguised very well. The equipment that you carry and the foreigners that you meet create the perfect atmosphere – I especially liked the piranhas that jump out of the river. This game has so much content and it's sheer fun. "**

HOWARD THE DUCK

Producer: Activision
Retail Price: **£9.99**
Author: **Software Studios**

Howard is an extra-terrestrial duck who has been mysteriously spirited to Earth. He looks a bit odd, but is an amicable fellow with two friends, Beverly and Phil. Beverly and Phil are good sorts too, but they have just been kidnapped by the Dark Overlord, who has taken them to his abode on Volcano Island. Howard is a mite peeved at this, and so he sets out on a rescue mission. What he doesn't know is that the Overlord is expecting this sort of reaction, and has set traps to capture the feathered hero.

To begin with, the player's name is typed in and the level of play selected from the four provided: novice, intermediate, advanced, and expert. The levels differ in the number of lives granted, the enemy's aggression level and the length of the game.

The screen displays a view of the island, with Howard automatically parachuting onto a pathway. The joystick is used to move Howard around, and he can go anywhere as long as the landscape allows, scrolling the scenery as he goes. The fire button makes him jump, kick and punch, the action depending on his situation.

The first part of the mission follows Howard's heroic journey across the island. First he has to find the back-pack which he dropped during the parachute drop. This contains a Solar-Powered Jet-Pack, a Microlite Flying Machine and a portable Neutron Disintegrator.

Having found the pack, our feathered friend makes his way around the island to a volcano, home of the Overlord. Hazards are encountered throughout this journey: mutant slime has to be jumped and mini-mutants intent on Howard's capture pop up from molehills. These are dispatched with swift, well-aimed kicks, and jumping on the molehills prevents their re-emergence.

Should Howard reach the foot of the volcano he is automatically

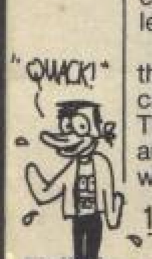
BEN

" A film tie-in which actually relates to its subject matter is an unusual event, so on this level Howard the Duck is quite a pleasant surprise. The program sticks as closely as possible to the film (considering the limitations of the computer game format), so the only real pity is that the film was so naff! The presentation is up to Activision's usual standard, and the graphics and sound are competent and functional – the only problem gameplay-wise is that the control method is quite tricky. Howard the computer game is an average, but ultimately uninteresting product – and quite expensive to boot. "



PAUL

" At first sight Howard The Duck **is a very attractive Spy Vs Spy lookalike. The graphics are very well designed, combining some good detail with lots of colour. The instructions are commendably friendly, giving all of the necessary facts. I particularly liked the difficulty ratings – they improved the addictiveness ten times over, and should appeal to all types of player.** Howard The Duck **is a pleasing game, although the price is a bit over the top. "**



and an illuminated icon at the base of the screen informs of the object currently held.

Points are awarded for despatched attackers, but jungle life can be tedious, so watch out for five gems which may lie in strange places such as birds' nests; only when all of these have been collected is there any chance of passing the secret temple.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, Space to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Use of colour: no clashes, lots used to make colourful and varied screens
Graphics: neatly described characters, good animation
Sound: no tune on 48K and few FX, title tune and better FX on 128
Skill levels: one
Screens: 63
General rating: A modest sounding game that surprises for its polished design and interesting play.

Presentation	71%
Graphics	70%
Playability	80%
Addictive qualities	74%
Value for money	77%
Overall	77%

strapped in to his microlite. He must then fly over the mouth of the volcano and parachute in.

The penultimate section involves a dangerous run through a crumbling cave, where falling stalagtites and holes in the floor impede the duck's progress. When this has been negotiated, Howard meets the Overlord in a final, deadly confrontation. The evil kidnapper dies when shot three times with the neutron disintegrator.

COMMENTS

Control keys: 7/6 up/down, 5/8 left/right, zero to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: varied, and generally clash free
Graphics: small sprites on a lively background
Sound: limited to rare spot FX
Skill levels: four
General rating: A slightly above average game which has sprung from a dreadful movie.

Presentation	77%
Graphics	72%
Playability	59%
Addictive qualities	49%
Value for money	53%
Overall	61%

RED SCORPION

Producer: Quicksilva
Retail Price: **£8.95**

The Bombyx Moons are almost entirely composed of pure Talanite, which the evil Necrons are ripping off from the Bombyxians. Terran civilisation can offer them far more. To that end you, as a Star Commando, are sent to the Bombyx Moons to dispose of Necronian personnel and their military and communication installations.

Ferried by the mother ships 'Zhukov' and 'Coral Sea' you're dropped to a moon's surface in a Red Scorpion space fighter. A head up display views the combat zone on a horizontally scrolling screen.

Red Scorpion moves left, right, forward and back, with direction indicated on a navigational geocompass. The craft carries four vision systems: microwave, which detects underground installations and looks through camouflage; infra red, which detects fast moving objects; ultra violet which identifies Talanite sources; and natural light.

It carries four threat detectors, activated when enemy targets come within range. These detect above ground structures, Talanite mines, armed aliens, and Necron missiles. Additional help is given by the 'Coral Sea' which relays information about Necron missile launches.

Enemy fire damages Red Scorpion's shields, with a two-figure number at the top left of the screen indicating their condition. When that rating falls to zero the next hit destroys the craft.

The ship's armoury is made up of armour-piercing missiles, cluster bombs, sonic stunners, a multi-frequency electronic warfare system, and a particle cannon. Points are awarded for each enemy target destroyed, and a total is shown at the top of the screen. Ten on-screen icons show the status of weapon and vision systems.

Both mother ships are used during the operation, a rendezvous can be made with the Coral Sea and Zhukov provides heavy cover fire, this however causes damage to the Red Scorpion's shields.

Complete the mission successfully and promotion is yours.

COMMENTS

● " **What's this,** Battlezone **with a plot and a strategy element? Nobody could possibly cope with the nasty icons, the hostile craft that you can't shoot because you're supposed to be friends and the rest of the abysmally slow and over-complicated gameplay. The graphics are as well defined as most vector graphics, but the icons leave something to be desired in the way of clarity. On the whole I'd give this a miss, it might have been worth a look for two quid, but for nearer nine pounds it isn't worth it.** "

BEN

● *" I'm sure that there's a perfectly good game in this package . . . somewhere. It seems to have been lost in the unhelpful instructions – too much scenario and not enough fact. The whole idea of a Battlezone type game is always enticing if the graphics are fast and flicker-free – but this one misses out on the former. Red Scorpion is well laid-out, but it lacks the necessary speed. "*

PAUL

● " I'm sure the authors are disappointed with *Red Scorpion*; I know I am. The packaging is very good, with a generally professional feel – but that's what you expect when a company has been around as long as Quicksilva. Their experience doesn't come to light on the game though, which falls far below standard and is nothing more than a poor *Battlezone* variant. The icons on the bottom of the screen are a nice addition, but when compared to something as slick as Realtime's semi-ancient *Tank Duel*, it's not up to scratch. "

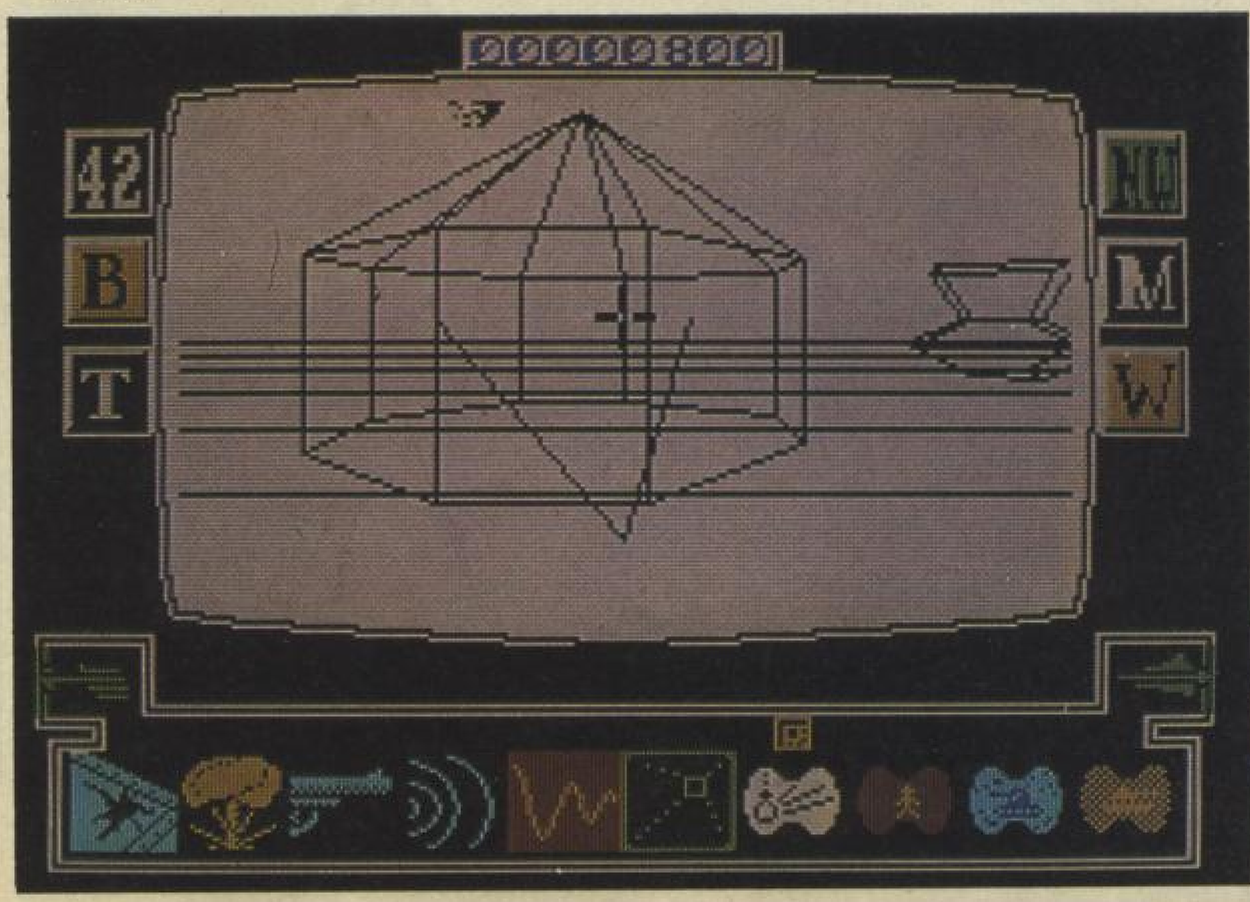
MIKE

CRITICISM

Control keys: Y/H up/down, O/P left/right, J or bottom row to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Use of colour: some distinction made between craft
Graphics: wire frame 3D
Sound: limited
Skill levels: one
Screens: continuous landscape
General rating: Slick instructions imply complex game, but really there's nothing much new in this variant

Presentation	66%
Graphics	53%
Playability	36%
Addictive qualities	39%
Value for money	38%
Overall	41%

► **The view of an enemy pillbox appears on your Red Scorpion head-up display, while below, icons indicate the weaponry available.**



THE FINAL MATRIX

Producer: Gremlin Graphics
Retail price: **£8.95**

Our hero, Nimrod the Biopton, has been called upon to rescue his fellow Bioptons. Captured by a bunch of unfriendly Cratons, the hapless Bioptons have been taken hostage, and locked them away in the matrix, a network of prison planets.

Despite all the miracles of technology, molecular transfer (ie, 'beam them up, Scotty') hasn't come about yet, so Nimrod is required to toddle off into this potential death-trap all by himself in an attempt to rescue the captives.

The matrix spreads over a vast area of the galaxy, but since its extent is unknown, the first task is to locate matrix planets and then infiltrate them. The Bioptons have been scattered throughout the matrix, so Nimrod is going to be visiting several planets. Locations is achieved by using a display monitor called the Pentavision, which identifies matrix planets. The on-screen-sights can be manoeuvred so they centre over a planet, and then Nimrod is transported to its surface.

Once down, the hunt for the hostage is on. The display switches to an unusual isometric view, scrolling horizontally or vertically depending on Nimrod's direction, and if *that* isn't to be aimless he might be thankful for a map. Fortunately Craton telly isn't all its cracked up to be, just map programmes for entertainment, but seeing one isn't so easy . . . Cratons appear to look down on their TVs from a great height. This forces Nimrod to stand *on top* of the monitor to look at the map. Lucky for him, then, that upward thrust-paks are available to propell him into the air so long as he approaches from the right direction.

Having located the hostage, Nimrod can return to the launch point, fellow Biopton in tow, and escape. The return route through the maze is indicated on a scanner top-right of the screen. Of course, the Cratons don't sit idly by, the matrix is littered with guards who are all on the offensive. Nimrod does have limited firepower at the outset, but the Cratons are a touch careless, and if searches, powerful weapons such as megabolts are to be found lying around.

The matrix planet maze is represented in different shades of one colour, each with their own effect. To succeed the style of floor designs, and their effects, should be remembered, for in addition to the patroling guards, there are mines, energy draining blocks, black ice and lethal disruptors.

Nimrod's mission isn't going to be easy, but he does have 99 eons to do it in; unfortunately, one Biopton eon is equal to only one of our minutes. Ho hum . . .

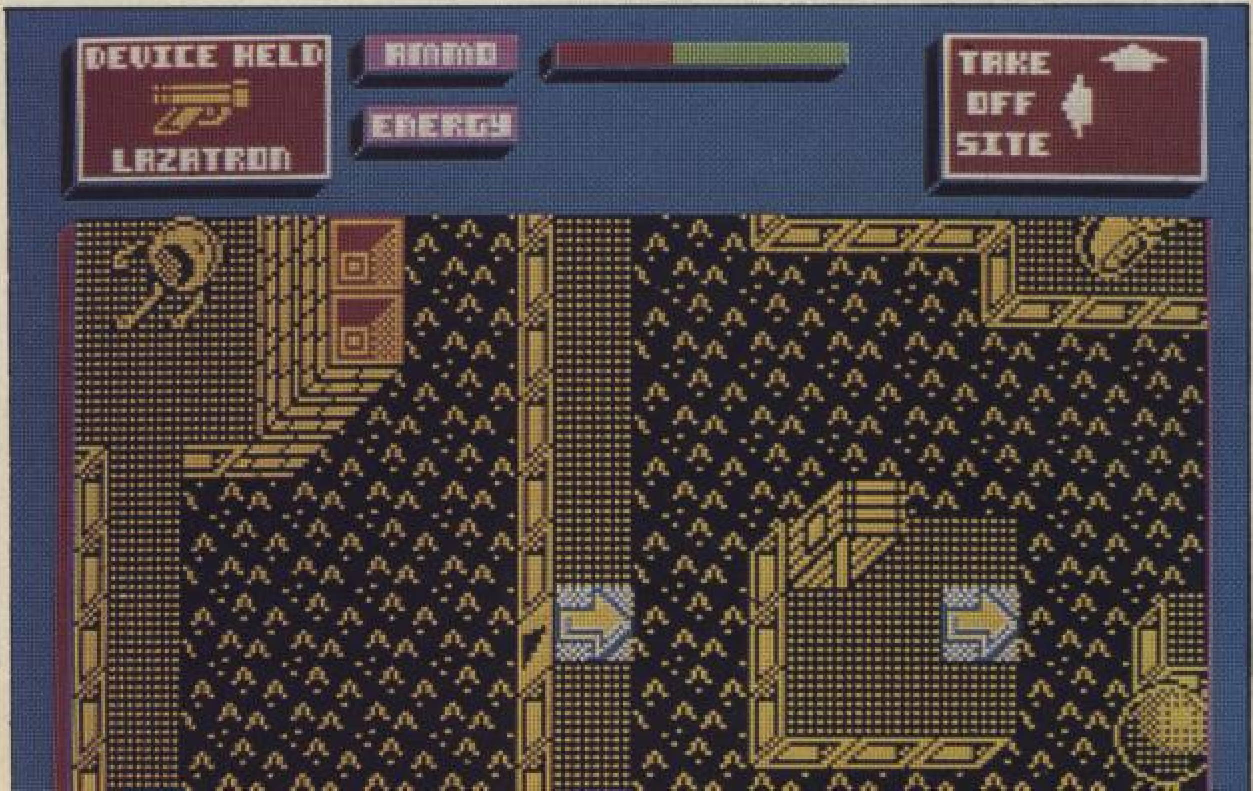
RICKY

" Take it from me, The Final Matrix **is a ruthless game – so if you're not planning to spend quite a while practising then you may as well ignore it. However, and here's the crunch, it's a really addictive and highly exciting game. There's plenty of content, but it's very well presented and so not too daunting to play. Graphically,** Matrix **is quite odd, but nonetheless pleasing to the eye. The display remains consistently clear, although the way the screen scrolls (not til you reach the very edge of a screen) can be offputting when a guard suddenly appears from nowhere. It's a neat entertainment that offers quite a bit to experienced games players."**

► **On board his craft, Nimrod consults the Pentavision for clues as to the whereabouts of a matrix prison planet.**



► **The unusually high isometric style 3D display of** The Final Matrix **when down on a planet's surface**



MIKE

" As an arcade adventure, The Final Matrix **presents some extremely devious puzzles and a whole host of planets to explore. The graphics are strange in that they use an unorthodox, overhead viewpoint rather than the normal 3D perspective; this looks odd, but works unusually well. The backdrops are neat and clearly presented, with a good use of colour, although the scrolling is a bit on the jerky side. Those who persevere will no doubt find a worthwhile challenge in** Matrix**, but be prepared to spend a lot of time going to and from the title screen: it's tough."**

BEN

" I'm sure that this would be much better suited to Gremlin's five quid semi-budget price tag than nearer eight pounds. Having said this, The Final Matrix **is a very original and versatile game. My only nag is that it's much too difficult, a first time player would be lucky to survive for more than a few seconds, and after playing for a considerable time I'm still having trouble progressing through the game at all. Generally this is well presented both graphically and sonically – a tune and a title screen wouldn't go amiss though . . . "**

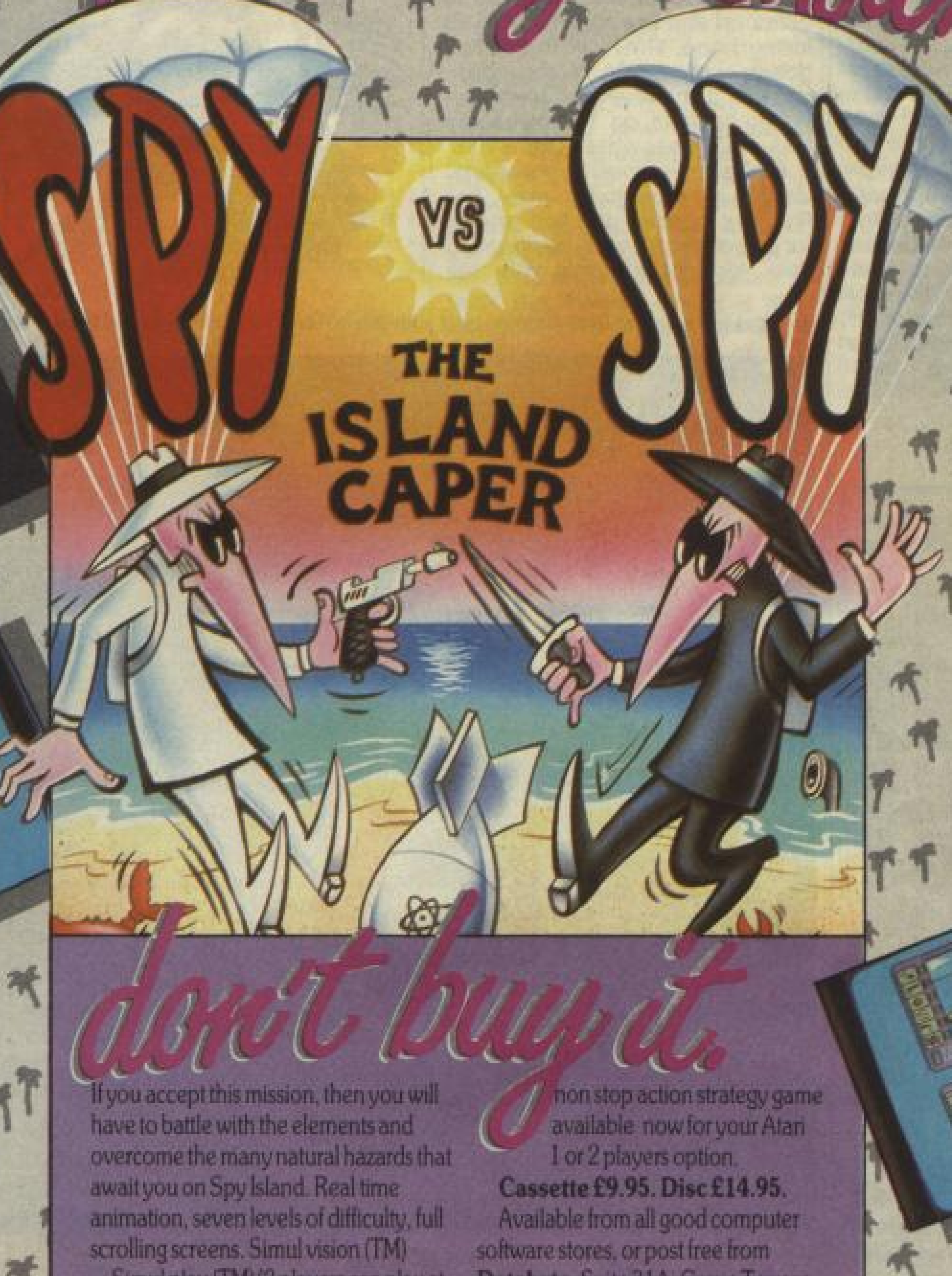
COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: monochromatic playing area
Graphics: fast in space, tidy and unusual 3D on planets
Sound: good general (and spot) FX
Skill levels: one
Screens: space screen and large scrolling surface play area
General rating: This unusual and addictive game presents a very tough challenge.

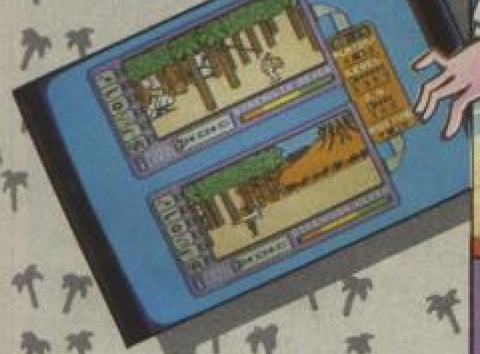
Presentation	72%
Graphics	76%
Playability	65%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	65%
Overall	75%

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BARBARIAN

Producer: Palace Software
Retail Price: **£9.99**
Author: **Steve Brown and Shaun Griffiths**

Hardly a month goes by without a fighting game appearing on our review pages. However, amongst all the oriental offerings Palace's latest release takes us into the age of mythology with a beat 'em up featuring great hunky swordsmen, evil guardians and strange man-eating creatures.

BEN

" Make 'em bleeds, beat 'em ups or whatever they're called nowadays . . . I love 'em, especially when they're as beautifully programmed as this. A few more characters and backgrounds wouldn't have gone amiss, but this still compares well with Palace's other releases. What characters are there are excellently animated and well drawn, and the backgrounds are also pretty neat. I'd say that this is one of the best beat 'em ups on the Spectrum so far, even if it is a little expensive. "

The background is straight out of any Boys Own action story, telling of Drax, an evil sorcerer, who's lusting after the beautiful (and very wet) Princess Mariana. Unless she's delivered to him he shall unleash his unspeakable wrath upon the people of the Jewelled City. Drax gives only one alternative – the Jewelled City must offer up a champion to defeat his own.

Champion after champion is defeated and the Jewelled City is losing hope, when, from the forgotten wastelands of the north, comes a mysterious barbarian willing to take on the awesome task. And guess what? That's you.

Barbarian comes in two parts, loading in no particular order. The first is a combat practice routine for one or two players, designed to help you get to grips with the fighting moves and assess the strength of opponents. The second is a Fight to the Death – the real game where the Princess' future is at stake and where you eventually come face to face with



► **The evil sorcerer Drax presides over your doom – and yes, that's you, Barbarian, on the floor.**



► **You opponent aims an unpleasant slice at your thigh – prepared to be diced.**



RICKY

" Just as we were thinking that no-one would have the audacity to release another beat 'em up, along comes Palace with Barbarian **– and it's remarkably impressive. The package is very professionally put together, with a combat practice game and the actual event both included. The animation is so slick that the characters appear to have a little life of their own as they roll around. One of Barbarian's most pleasing elements is the sense of achievement as an opponent is defeated. Mastering** Barbarian **will take some time, but it's worth it. "**

Drax himself.

Similar to other beat 'em ups, *Barbarian* has 16 available moves – eight using the directional keys (these control body movements) and another eight with the directional keys and fire button (this gives the attacking movements). There are four stages, and four increasingly difficult opponents for Barbarian to beat on his way.

PAUL

" Yeah! Now this is what I call a real slice 'n' dice fight. The graphics are realistic, the backgrounds convincing and (best of all) there's proper movement (like heads coming off) – games like this really bring out the animal in me. The program itself is very simple in construction, but it's all brilliantly executed and very addictive. I loved the way the little character comes on at the end of a battle, kicking the loser's head off the screen and pulling the body behind him. Barbarian **is easy to escape in, and hard to get away from. Worth the asking price, without a doubt. "**

As each foe is defeated (literally by knocking his head off), a small lizard-like creature ambles across the screen, kicks the severed head aside and drags the body off to prepare for a feast. Tasty.

On the final screen you have to fight the mighty Drax. He's is no swordsman and launches into battle by hurling bolts of magic; these should be avoided to the best of your ability and a physical attack launched. With Drax defeated, Princess Mariana is saved and shall probably want to marry you (or something soppy like that).

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: brightly designed surround and monochromatic playing area
Graphics: simple backdrops, but large, excellently animated characters
Sound: even 48K sound boasts a great tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: eight stages, plus two-player practice mode
General rating: Probably the best Spectrum beat 'em up yet, playable, addictive and worth the steep price.

Presentation	81%
Graphics	89%
Playability	83%
Addictive qualities	86%
Value for money	74%
Overall	85%

ENTERPRISE

Producer: Melbourne House
Retail Price: **£7.95**

Trading with the aliens is the only way to make a fast intergalactic megabuck these days. And as you're facing a massive prison sentence back home, the thought of trading minerals on 5.2 billion planets is more than inviting.

Your ship (stolen of course), moves left and right, up and down, accelerates, slows and rolls. The main screen shows surrounding starfields, but can be replaced by a map from which a prospective trading planet's honesty, economy, helpfulness and mineral class is assessed. If a planet is suitable, its coordinates are plotted and a hyperjump made.

Having pierced the atmosphere, a surface landscape appears on screen. To help your landing, onscreen prompts indicate when landing gear should be engaged and engines switched off. Additional information is provided by Yaw, Pitch and Roll indicators at the top of the screen and Speed, Acceleration, and Altitude readouts at its base.

BEN

" No it's not a Star Trek **rip-off, but who's to say that you won't come across the USS Enterprise and her crew members somewhere between the four billion planets! The effects are pretty (although there could be a little more variation), and the way in which the planets and landscapes have been executed works excellently. However,** Enterprise **probably won't have a lot of lasting appeal, as it's basically an** Elite **variant without the extensive and all important shoot 'em up sections. "**

PAUL

" I was completely surprised by Enterprise**, it feels somewhat like a less addictive** Elite**. The presentation is average and the sound effects minimal, which serves to create very little atmosphere. The only real fun part is the conversation with the trading aliens – it can prove very profitable or unproductive, but it produces a good bit of jovial banter with one of the locals.** Enterprise **makes quite a change, not mega, but worth a peek. "**

Trading with aliens begins when a successful landing has been made. These fall into two types – those that are helpful and honest and those that aren't. Choose carefully with whom you deal, and beware of those that engage in idle chit-chat. To save conversational time, stock phrases can be called up.

The price of minerals is determined by their rarity and the trading planet's economy. Bargains can be picked up though, and bulk buying offers discounts. You can also buy food, fuel, insurance and ship repairs. All trades are logged into the ship's computer, and your bank account accordingly adjusted. Be careful that you have sufficient funds, otherwise you'll find yourself in trouble with the police, or wiped out by the Ron Nice Guy Credit agency. Though this nest egg may be earning you interest, it's also eaten away by the ravages of inflation, constantly increasing the wealth you need in order to retire to Paradise Planet.

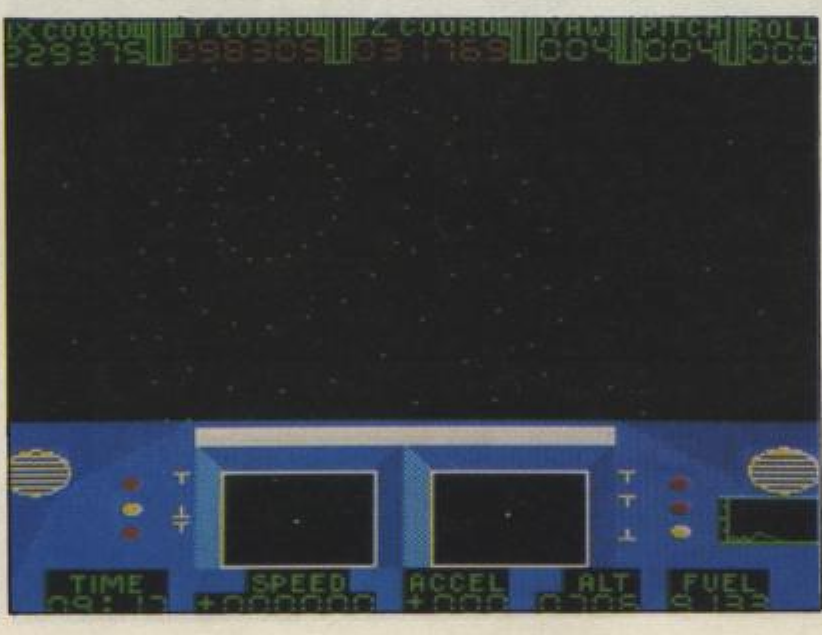
Damage occurs to the ship's primary systems, with the fuselage the most vulnerable, expensive and potentially disastrous section to go down. When damaged, engines and boosters run less efficiently with increasing fuel consumption, remaining levels are shown at the bottom right of the screen; whilst imperfect shields, landing gear and braking systems fail only with use; cargo doors can jam open; and faulty storage systems cause food to rot. Systems can sustain damage in collisions with minerals, police ships, or if left activated, during entry into a planet's atmosphere.

To give you some protection, seven types of insurance policy are available. The price of each is dependent upon a planet's economy and the status of insured items. Should a claim be made against the policy, the items are returned to you in the state they were in when the insurance was taken out.

MIKE

" There are some lovely effects in Enterprise **– including a marvellous spinning planet – but it still doesn't generate much excitement. None of the many tasks offered any sense of achievement – however swapping idle banter with the planet's residents became quite pleasant. If you want a game that doesn't just rely on killing off the universe,** Enterprise **is worth considering – but it's not the type that I'd really go for. "**

In the course of your wheeling and dealing, it's all too easy to commit crimes: booster rockets damage nearby craft, and hyperjump rockets destroy them. A consequent arrest by the interplanetary police causes financial damage, along with a potentially problematic criminal record.



COMMENTS

Control keys: Cursors and other inputs
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Use of colour: good
Graphics: some spledid effects, and neat characters
Sound: minimal
Skill levels: one
General rating: A slower-paced trading game with some arcade skills required, more likely to appeal to fans of the genre.

Presentation	64%
Graphics	63%
Playability	61%
Addictive qualities	53%
Value for money	61%
Overall	59%

DOGFIGHT 2187

Producer: Starlight
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Timothy Walker**

Menacing aliens have entered our Universe through a rip in the space time continuum. Rhett Dexter is the only man who can stop their otherwise irrevocable dictatorship. To do that he must first gather nine of the 100 separated components of the Spatial Generator. Once these are reunited the rent in the space fabric can be sealed.

Seated in his interstellar fighter, Rhett guides it horizontally and vertically, accelerating and braking, by watching his two-part split screen – enemy craft shown on the left, and his own on the right.

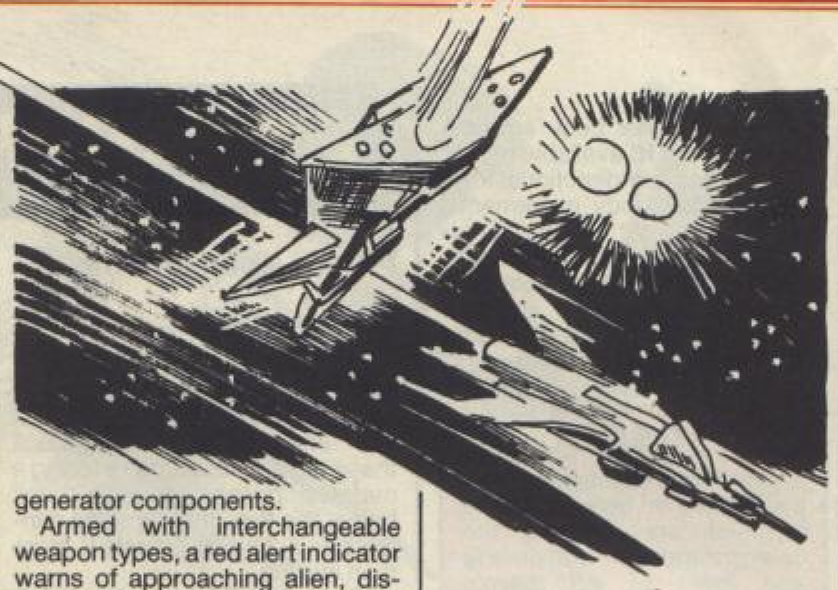
The fighter's position is shown by a flashing dot on the galactic compass at the top left of the screen, with the intersection of the crosshairs aligned with the distant space hole. A centrally placed radar indicates the relative position of other craft, planets and generator components.

Armed with interchangeable weapon types, a red alert indicator warns of approaching alien, displaying their vulnerable points on a schematic at the base of the screen. Some enemies require several hits before they are destroyed, and for each one blasted points are awarded.

The fighter's fuel supplies and the power of its protective shield are limited. Should fuel levels fall to zero the mission fails. But recharging and refuelling is undertaken by flying through the rotating vector squares on various planets – revealed when all enemy craft in the area have been blasted. During this stage up to four enemy ships may appear and attack, if they do Rhett must defend himself fast.

A countdown clock displays the time left before the aliens' domination of the Universe becomes inevitable. And it's a big place; any of the Universe's 256 sectors may be warped to, and searched for components, though this can only be done after refuelling or upon collection of at least one generator piece. The vital component parts are revealed on the main screen when all enemy craft in the sector have been eliminated.

After destruction, any pieces alien craft may have been carrying can be picked up by Rhett. When components are collected the fact is indicated at the bottom left of the screen. Only two pieces of generator can be carried at one time, and these must deposited at the hole before any other components can be collected. The hole consists of a nine square grid, generator parts plug the squares, when all are filled the Universe is saved.



PAUL

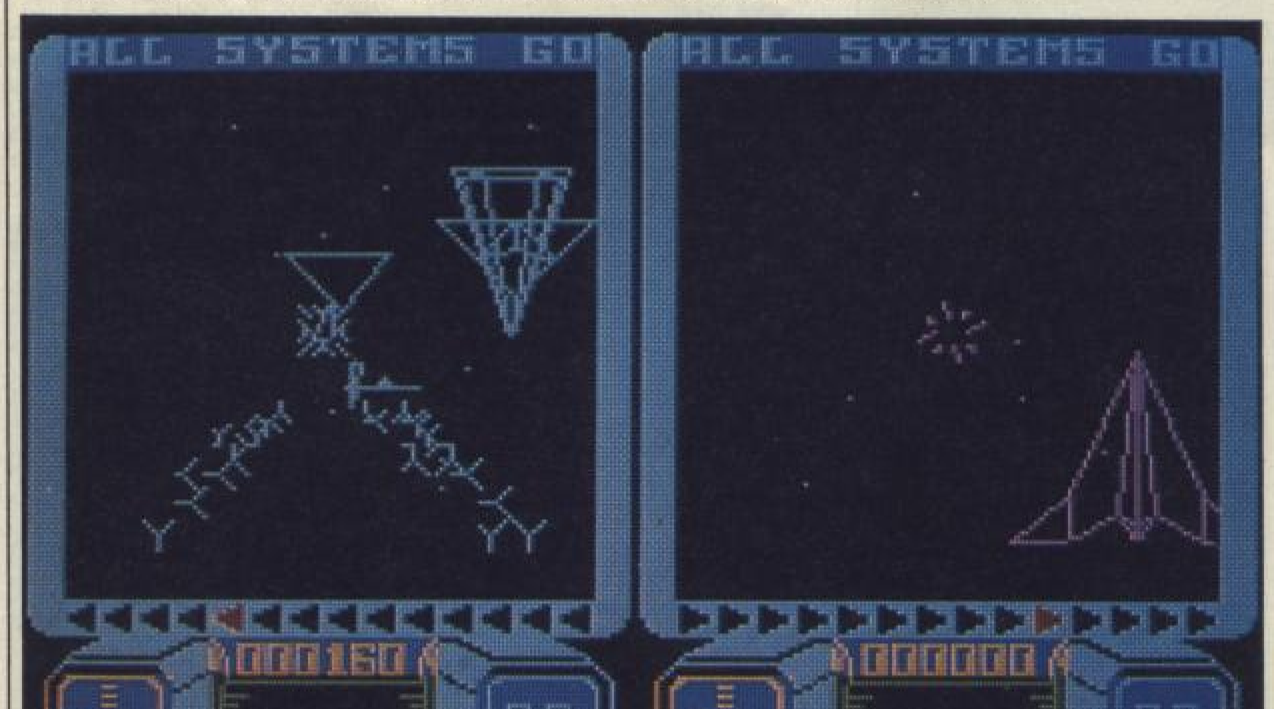
" What we have here is a large amount of Dark Star **and a bit of** Elite **all rolled into one rather boring vector graphic shoot 'em up. The fun is, of course, improved when choosing the two-player option, but I found the one-player game repetitive and shallow. It must be said that the vector graphics are superbly done – very smooth, yet still quite fast. I realise that the play area has to be reduced for a two-player game, but I would have liked to have seen more of the enemy when playing on my own. Good to see a sound option as what noise is heard is worth turning off. I'm surprised that such a simple and monotonous game should be released at a full price! "**

BEN

" A neat idea perhaps, but I don't think Dogfight **has been implemented as well as it should have been. The basic gameplay is simple enough, although on one-player mode it isn't too compelling, and lasting appeal will be short-lived as there's little variation throughout the game. The two-player mode is much more rewarding to play, because the split screen works well and the minimal use of graphics is hardly noticeable. If you have a friend to play this with, it's not a bad little game but playing solo left me cold. "**

MIKE

" Dogfight **looked as though it could have been a good game, but unfortunately, I thought it lacked quite a lot of playability. I enjoyed the first go, but that was just while I flew around and shot things to get a feel of the game. When you start looking for bits of the generator, though, it starts to get a bit more boring. The two-player mode makes it a bit more fun, but the graphics are still the best bit. "**



► Rhett Dexter's twin viewscreen, showing his own craft on the right, and enemy movement on the left.

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable, up/down, left/right, fire and change weapon needed
Joystick: Kempston
Use of colour: monochromatic playing area
Graphics: slow moving vectors
Sound: uninspiring, no tunes, few spot FX
Skill levels: one, although two-player mode offers two variations **Screens:** starscape
General rating: Neat two½player game, not so hot for the solo pilot.

Presentation	66%
Graphics	65%
Playability	56%
Addictive qualities	53%
Value for money	51%
Overall	56%


Piranha
THE Big SLEAZE
THE BIG SLEAZE
Some guys are good. Some guys are bad.
Sam Spillade was just plain dumb.
DELTA 4

the CRASH CHARTS



TOP 30 MAY

The **HOTLINE AND ADVENTURE CHART** compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games – it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms which live on the RESULTS PAGES and make your voice heard.

If you don't want to carve up your issue of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy the details from the voting forms onto a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your vote, there's always the chance of winning a prize. Each month we draw ten winners from all the voting forms received – five for the HOTLINE and five for the ADVENTURE chart.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T-shirt is awarded to the first slip drawn from the HOTLINE votes, and another £40 of goodies and a Shirt goes to the Adventure draw winner.

Four runners up from each ballot box collect a CRASH T-shirt and a CRASH Hat. So get those votes in to the **CRASH HOTLINE and CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.**

THE BOGGIT and HEAVY ON THE MAGICK are still fighting it out for the top two positions, while a 12-place plummet suggests you're getting bored of BORED OF THE RINGS.

The Adventure Trail £40 worth of software goes to **Christopher O'Leary** *from Nether Heage in Derbyshire, and the four runners-up are:* **David Clegg** *from Ossett, West Yorkshire;* **Jade Murray** *from Basildon, Essex;* **Richard Wong** *from Liverpool; and* **Steven Nicholson** *from Woodford Green, Essex.*

Ten new entries! GAUNTLET and COBRA stay at the top of the Hotline chart for the third month running – but there's more excitement in the top slots this month than last, as FEUD fights its way up. Poor PAPER BOY runs for his life. Elite just beats Ocean with six places to five, and perhaps Firebird can look forward to two frontrunners next month when THE SENTINEL's had time to absorb its way up the chart . . .

This month's winner of £40 worth of software for his Hotline entry is **David Glynn** *from Bolton in Lancashire. The four runners-up are:* **Ian Treasure** *from Helston, Cornwall;* **John Taylor** *from Norwich;* **Tim Watkin** *from Northwich, Cheshire; and* **Robert Benson** *from Derby.*



Hotline Top 30

1 (1)	GAUNTLET	US GOLD
2 (2)	COBRA	OCEAN
3 (12)	FEUD	MASTERTRONIC
4 (8)	ELITE	FIREBIRD
5 (-)	HEAD OVER HEELS	OCEAN
6 (-)	ENDURO RACER	ACTIVISION
7 (4)	URIDIUM	HEWSON
8 (6)	STARGLIDER	RAINBIRD
9 (3)	PAPER BOY	ELITE
10 (9)	COMMANDO	ELITE
11 (7)	BOMBJACK	ELITE
12 (14)	QUAZATRON	HEWSON
13 (10)	MATCHDAY	OCEAN
14 (5)	THE GREAT ESCAPE	OCEAN
15 (11)	LIGHTFORCE	FTL
16 (-)	ACADEMY	CRL
17 (21)	FIST 2	MELBOURNE HOUSE
18 (28)	BATMAN	OCEAN
19 (-)	SABOTEUR 2	DURELL
20 (-)	AUF WIEDER MONTY	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
21 (27)	TRIVIAL PURSUIT	DOMARK
22 (-)	SPLIT PERSONALITIES	DOMARK
23 (22)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
24 (23)	SPACE HARRIER	ELITE
25 (-)	1942	ELITE
26 (-)	WORLD GAMES	US GOLD/EPYX
27 (19)	SCOOBY DOO	ELITE
28 (-)	THE SENTINEL	FIREBIRD
29 (-)	THANATOS	DURELL
30 (24)	SPELLBOUND	MAD

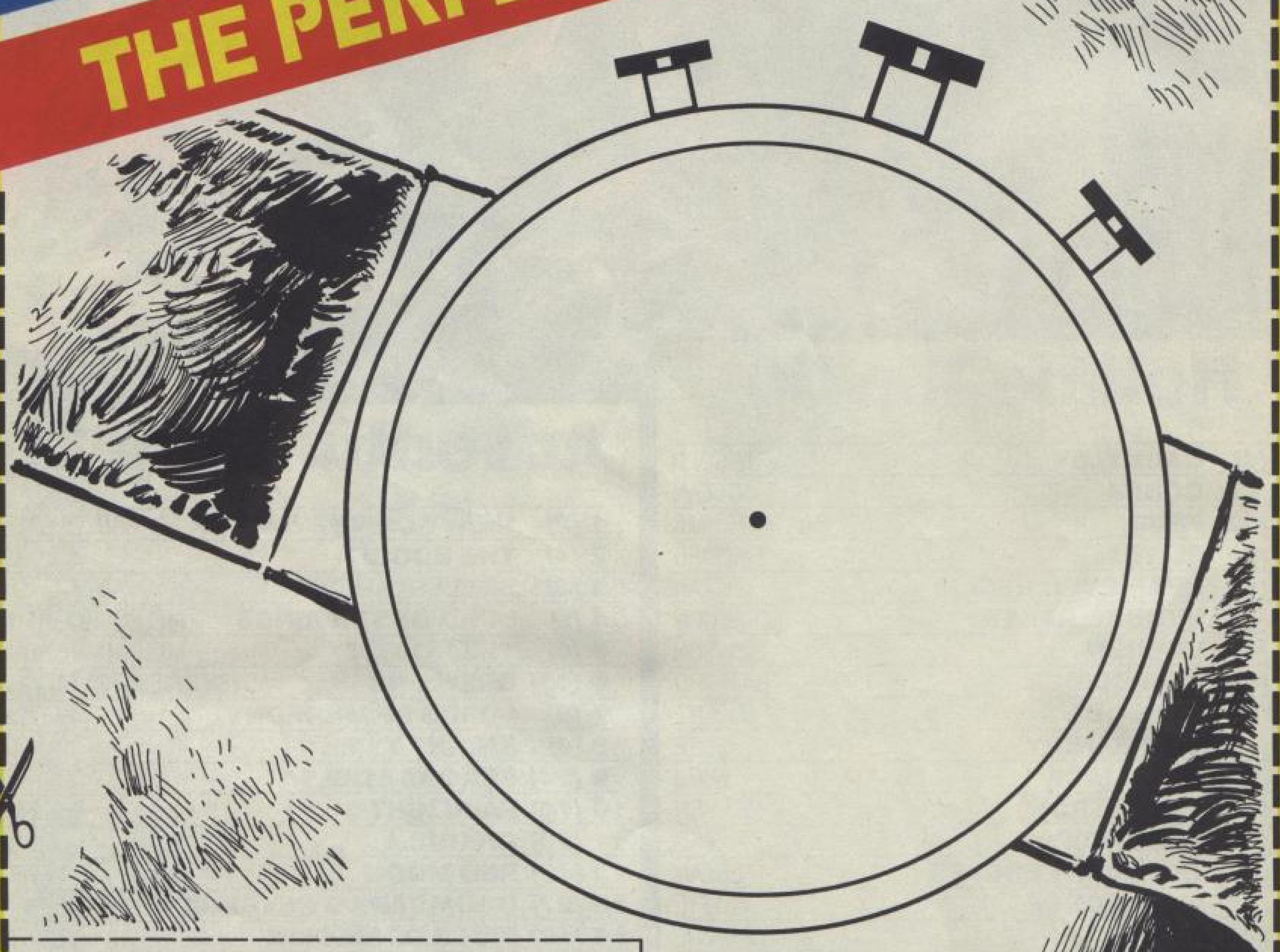
Adventure Top 30

1 (2)	HEAVY ON THE MAGICK	GARGOYLE GAMES
2 (1)	THE BOGGIT	CRL
3 (3)	SPELLBOUND	MAD
4 (9)	LORD OF THE RINGS	MELBOURNE HOUSE
5 (6)	THE HOBBIT	MELBOURNE HOUSE
6 (13)	GREMLINS	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
7 (8)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	BEYOND
8 (4)	KNIGHT TYME	MAD
9 (24)	SEA BASE DELTA	FIREBIRD
10 (14)	FAIRLIGHT 2	THE EDGE
11 (20)	DRACULA	CRL
12 (12)	RED MOON	LEVEL 9
13 (27)	DOOMDARK'S REVENGE	BEYOND
14 (10)	PRICE OF MAGICK	LEVEL 9
15 (29)	ENIGMA FORCE	BEYOND
16 (-)	DUN DARACH	GARGOYLE GAMES
17 (5)	BORED OF THE RINGS	CRL
18 (-)	ZZZZ	MASTERTRONIC
19 (25)	VERA CRUZ	INFOGRAMES
20 (26)	KAYLETH	US GOLD
21 (22)	SPIDERMAN	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
22 (-)	KENTILLA	QUICKSILVA
23 (-)	FOURTH PROTOCOL	CENTURY HUTCHINSON
24 (17)	MINDSHADOW	ACTIVISION
25 (15)	SHERLOCK	MELBOURNE HOUSE
26 (23)	SWORDS AND SORCERY	PSS
27 (21)	HAMPSTEAD	MELBOURNE HOUSE
28 (7)	JEWELS OF DARKNESS	RAINBIRD
29 (-)	THE SIDNEY AFFAIR	INFOGRAMES
30 (19)	MARSPORT	GARGOYLE GAMES

Crash Competition

Win a stopwatch, and numerous copies of US Gold's new arcade blockbuster METROCROSS in . . .

THE PERFECT TIMING COMP



Name ....

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Have you got perfect timing? You have! Good, then go away – this great *Metrocross* competition is for readers that haven't.

US Gold are helping these poor unfortunates out by offering a watch to help them keep time. As this comp is being scrawled onto paper, Richard Tidsall, the man with the US Golden touch, is busily rushing around Birmingham searching out the best sports stopwatch that the recently breached US Gold piggy bank can afford – plus . . . a copy of the game for the winner, and 20 more for the next-best entrants (phew!). Anyway, about the game . . .

Strangely enough, *Metrocross* is not about angry people in the Paris underground. No . . . it's a challenge designed to inspire you (at least that's what the blurb says). This conversion from the Namco arcade game sees you hurtling down a horizontally-scrolling tunnel riddled with potholes, a barrage of obstacles and a plethora of no-go areas devised to push your frustration to its limit.

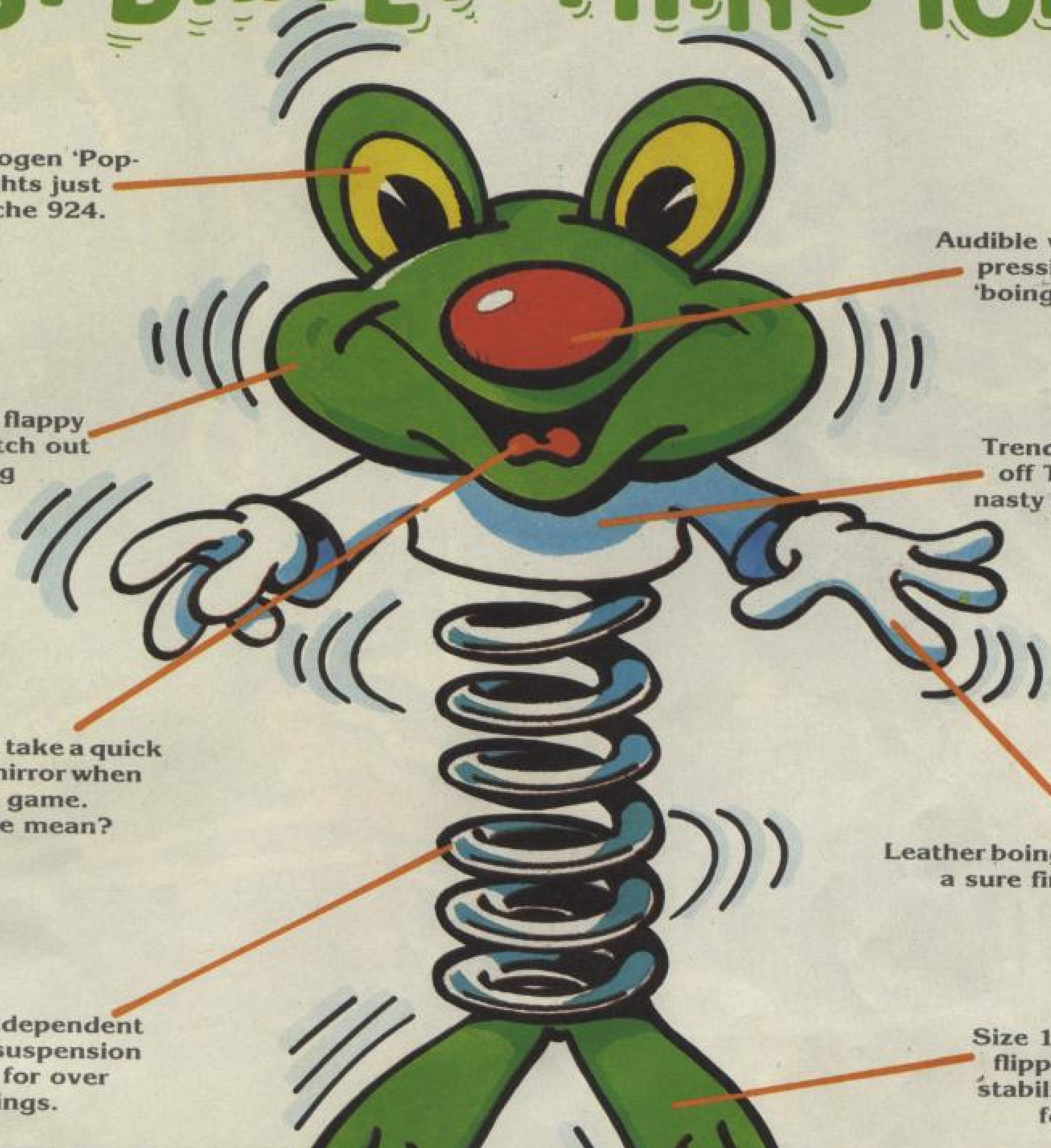
The key factor in this space-age obstacle race is time – you're constantly playing against the clock – and if you haven't got perfect timing then you're metropulp.

To win these fab prizes we're calling upon your artistic talents to design a special CRASH watch that any minion would be proud to own. Take our blank watch and fill its empty face with copious inspirational scribblings. That done, send the result by post, helicopter or one-legged carrier pigeon to:

TICKING MINIONS,
CRASH,
PO Box 10, Ludlow,
Shropshire SY8 1DB.
Designs should be in by 25 June at the latest.

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TEST DRIVE A THING TODAY!



Quartz Halogen 'Pop-Up' headlights just like a Porsche 924.

Audible warning device pressing results in a 'boing, boing, boing' noise.

Extra large flappy cheeks, watch out for tweaking grandads.

Trendy designer cut off T-Shirt (causes nasty draught round your coils).

Stupid grin, take a quick look in the mirror when playing this game. See what we mean?

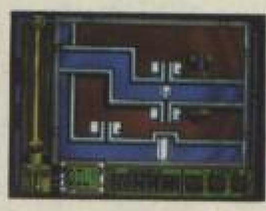
Leather boinging gloves for a sure fire grip on that joystick.

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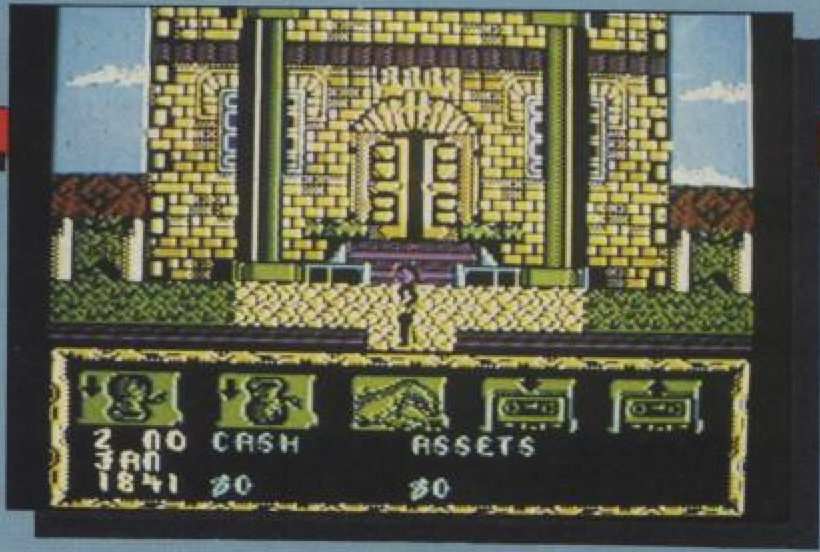


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PREVIEW

MERELY MANGRAM

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!



▶ Dirk from Tai-Pan casually hanging around outside a 'house of ill repute'.

As the May Fair noisily bussles out of Ludlow my poor head still spins from the 'rides' onto which I was unwillingly dragged by the odious team – not really my thing – but I'm still expected to bring you a round up of games coming to a Spectrum near you soon.

To kick off then . . . **Ocean** has a veritable plethora of releases scheduled over the next few months, most notable, perhaps, being *Tai-Pan* – an arcade adventure on the high China seas taken from James Clavell's novel of the same name. The action is set in the 1840s, with you playing the role of intrepid Dirk Struan, who starts his adventure as a penniless trader and hopes to make it all the way up the oriental ladder to be come the Tai-Pan, a merchant Prince with lots of loot (and a harem no doubt).

Tai-Pan offers some variety in its gameplay – there's a trading game, a simple shoot 'em up and an arcade adventure – but to master it you'll need to become proficient in all three. Its programming team, **Sentient Software**, has finally managed to squeeze the whole lot into one 48K load – well, most of it anyway. On the 128K or +2 there's extra music by **Peter Clarke**, and lurking within the depths of the 128 version, there's an additional gambling game.

Dirk begins his epic quest in Canton, desperately trying to scrape some cash together to buy a ship. Three types of vessel are available, a Lorcha, a Clipper and (most expensive) a Frigate. Once a ship is possessed, a crew must be found – pay them to sail with you, or pressgang them, it's entirely up to you. You can then set off along the safe shipping routes, or risk the navigational tortures of the high seas. Either way, there's plenty of money to be made – if your crew is loyal and doesn't mutiny.

Tai-Pan boasts 32 ports, each with 32 locations, so it looks as though mapping is going to be pretty essential. As good as finished when we saw it, look out for the full review next month. In meantime you may be interested to know that my local Chinese takeaway does a very nice Egg Fu Yung.

The hack I sent up to Manchester to see Ocean's forthcoming output also came across *Renegade*, an arcade conversion. Apparently the graphics on the later levels are quite stunning, but sadly the said hack ran out of film! However there should be a shot of the first level on the page somewhere. *Renegade* is a horizontally scrolling beat 'em up with lots of opponents. It should be finished just in time for review next month; certainly one to watch out for.



▶ It all looks pretty safe for the mo – but just wait for the action to hot up in Renegade.

After many, many months of waiting *Mag Max* is almost ready. It seems the delay was due to the first team of programmers messing up the attempt to reproduce it on the Spectrum. Ocean decided against publishing it, and started again from scratch. *Mag Max* is simply an out and out shoot 'em up played on a right-to-left scrolling grid. You start out with a fairly wimpy ship, but it can be built up by adding a head and legs to it (yes, I know it sounds incredibly silly), and then you hurtle through caverns killing off the usual bunch of ensuing aliens. *Mag Max* is yours for £7.95 very soon.

▶ Build-a-longa-Max – the robot complete in Mag Max.



Ocean has also tied up the arcade games *Gyrzor* from **Konami** and *Athena*, a brand new one; not to mention the licence to produce a game around the hit Vietnam war film *Platoon*; this one also designed and written by Sentient Software (as soon as they've finished *Tai-Pan* that is).



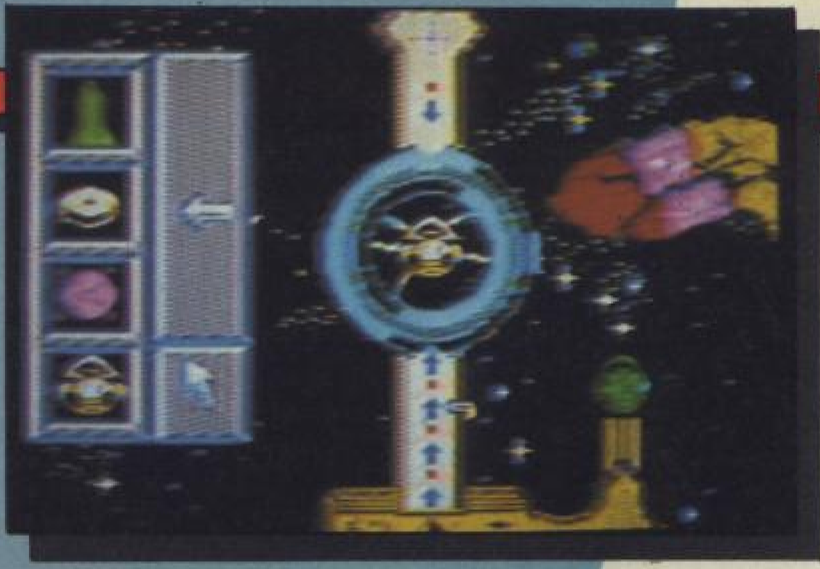
▶ It's Wizball, just checking that all is well (with thanks to Sensible Software for writing the caption).

From sentience to sensibility – **Sensible Software**'s Commodore creation, *Wizball* is being converted to the Spectrum by **Steve Watson** (programming) and **Mark Jones** (graphics) to be released at the end of May by Ocean. Taking the role of a fun-loving Wizard, you've got the latest form of spherical transport called Wizball for your use. Loads of aliens simply beg to be zapped into the middle of the next aeon while you busily colour in your sadly dull world. Aided by numerous feline (pussy cat) allies, you must suppress Zark's Dark Forces and make the whole world a better place to live in – cue Julie Andrews. As Sensible Software (have you seen those idiot hippies?) would say, 'It's action, action, action all the way, with 24 levels of fun-packed love and PANIC . . . and where's the nearest pub please?'

Finally on the Ocean shore, there's *Mutants*, an unusually entertaining original shoot 'em up. Interstellar war has raged across the centuries, weapons evolve until the ultimate in biological warfare is developed – Mutants. As the creator of such destructive monstrosities, the Survivor Zero Corporation becomes the target for pacifist attack. The Mutants are held in a 16-square space grid. 15 of these are electrically surrounded, mutant pens, the other is a control zone. As one of the pacifists you volunteer to fly a highly manoeuvrable fighter into each pen to collect its self-destruct mechanism. When all such devices are gathered and placed on an assembly unit in the control zone, the Mutants and their holding pens are destroyed. Outside the pens, Mutant strains of variable strength harass the fighter, debilitating its shields. The game's being converted from the Commodore at the moment and should be out in early June. ZZAP! gave it 90 percent.

In addition to *Micronaut One* (see following pages), **Nexus** is due to release a manic shoot 'em up dubbed *Hades Nebula* on 21 May, which is a vertically scrolling ▶

PREVIEW



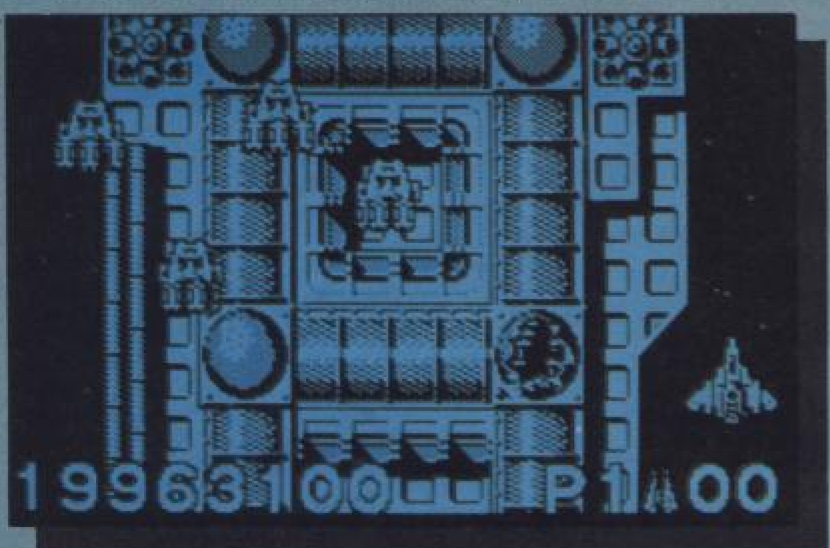
► Get ready for a truly awesome blast of psychedelic space in Mutants, coming from Ocean soon.

shoot 'em up with some glorious graphics boasting Double Parallax Scrolling (whatever that may be).

Meanwhile the poor programming slaves under Richard Tidsall's cruel whip over at **US Gold** aren't going to find much time for summer hols this year, what with the load of product they're preparing. First on the list is *Road Runner*, on licence from Atari's arcade machine out of the famous cartoon series. I've only seen some bits from the Commodore version, but it looks like it's going to be good fun. Screen shot for next issue, hopefully.

Another game straight from the arcades is *Indiana Jones*, featuring three levels of typical hero type action. Start off by rescuing some poor defenseless children, then leap across bridges over great ravines and finally travel down deep into the caverns for the real adventure. Until the full review, hopefully next month, feast your eyes on the screen shot, don the old safari jacket, grab your whip, and leap and bound around the garden rescuing any fair maidens you may come across.

► Flying over one of the many ships in Hades Nebula – from Nexus soon.



Finally, US Gold has *Last Mission* from **Data East** and *Rygor*, a fighting-cum-platform game from **Tecmo** up the collective sleeve. And the best of luck to them.

After converting *Uridium* to the Spectrum, *Zynaps* is **Dominic Robinson**'s first original game. He teams up with **John Cumming** to produce **Hewson**'s latest offering, aimed at the shoot 'em up brigade. With graphics by **Steve Crow** (*Wizard's Lair*, *Starquake*) and music from **Steve** *Rana Rama* **Turner**, the action moves across 450 scrolling screens of what Hewson calls 'a uniquely styled comic book format', with chapters and episodes. Reaching an alien stronghold for a bit of the old 'final conflict' is the name of the game. But to do that you've got to make like a Rentokil man and wipe out an alien-infested space station, battle through an asteroid storm without the aid of an umbrella and infiltrate unknown planets. Discarded weaponry and hyperspace units are on hand, but are they enough to sort out those alien hordes?

Wouldn't you know it! Too late for review, and just as I'm wrapping this up, in comes *Howard the Duck* from **Activision**. Based on the mixed-reception George Lucas film, it's sub-titled *Adventure on Volcano Island*, and features Howard rescuing his friends from the clutches of the Dark Overlord using his jet pack, amazing quack-fu skills and a laser. It's £9.99, and we'll get round to the full review next month.

Due for release in late May, **Mastertronic**'s *Milk Race* rides fast on the wheel tracks of the real thing. As one of the competitors in this round-Britain race you've got to pedal your way from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne to London in 13 stages. Hold your lead over these stages and you're the winner. Things ain't so easy as all that though. Against you are 83 other piston leggers, and hazards such as cars and potholes to ruin your chances of a victory pint of cow juice. Occasional time trials force you onto the road alone, racing against the clock – miss the time limit and it's bye-bye biker. On the credit side, however, are the kind pedestrian souls who offer you the odd glass of milk to boost your flagging energy levels.

And talking of flagging energy – and bikes – it's time to revitalise mine and start pedalling back up the hill to the cottage, home for tea.



This may look like the contents of the average office's dustbin, but in fact it's a series of clues which are necessary to solve the mystery in Murder on the Atlantic, **Infogrames' latest adventure.**

The era is the late thirties, and you're a police superintendent taking a well-earned break abord the Atlantic liner Bourgogne. However, a foul murder is committed soon after the ship leaves New York, and it's up to you to find the guilty party before the cruise ends in Europe. More foul play occurs throughout the trip, and the pace speeds up when you realise that the outcome of the second world war depends on your successful solution!

Murder on the Atlantic **should be available by the time you read this, priced at £12.95.**

► Dom 'n' John's Zynaps, a colourful blaster from Hewson.



THE EQUALISERS STRIKE BACK



MICRONAUT ONE
Nexus

A N APPARENTLY lifeless asteroid floats listlessly in space; but it's home to you, one of the greatest breakthroughs in technology – a living computer, half machine, half bio-organism. A network of interlinked tunnels running deep under the asteroid's equator is integral to its power system, for lying in dead-ends are four power generators that ought to be kept at optimum levels of energy. As a member of the Guild Of Equalisers, your life is geared to maintain this system and to keep power levels in the four generators stable, which largely means collecting power from an over-running generator and taking it to one which is under-powered.

Micronaut One is a new game from Pete Cooke, author of *Tau Ceti* and *Academy*, and while it's quite different from those two games, its front end is similar in being large, and offering plenty of flexibility within the game. You can fiddle with the screen colours, tunnel decorations, sound, take a look at the scores, play the demo, check out the map of the current tunnel network (four in all), scribble notes down on a pad or see what's happening on the Energy Transfer Unit (ETU) – the mechanism which monitors the status of each power generator.

There are two games too. First there's a simple tunnel-racing game against time for high-scoring heroes, but if you like something to race against, there's a speed-selectable 'pacer' available. Then there's the full game. As well as shuffling energy between generators and steering your craft through the twisting tunnel networks, a horde of creatures create bio-problems. These are the Scrim, and their entire life-cycle may be followed just by sitting quietly and watching one. They begin life as a egg quietly gestating and swelling on the tunnel floor. After a minute, with a rumble and a flash, they turn into slug-like larvae and scurry off into the distance. Follow closely, and shortly you will see the next stage; the larvae split in two, forming another egg and the adult Jellyfly.

Jellyflies, umbrella-shaped creatures, roam the tunnels building energy webs which block your way. The eggs are impervious to the electricity bolts you can hurl at them, but the other forms can be wiped out – if you catch up with them.

The speed and smoothness of the animated tunnels in *Micronaut One* is quite amazing and Pete Cooke has come remarkably close to producing a realistic 3D game that should please many a gamester. At the time of writing, Pete is still working on the gameplay; Nexus aims to release *Micronaut One* 'when it's ready', which should be very soon. Watch out for our special in-depth interview with Pete in next month's CRASH.

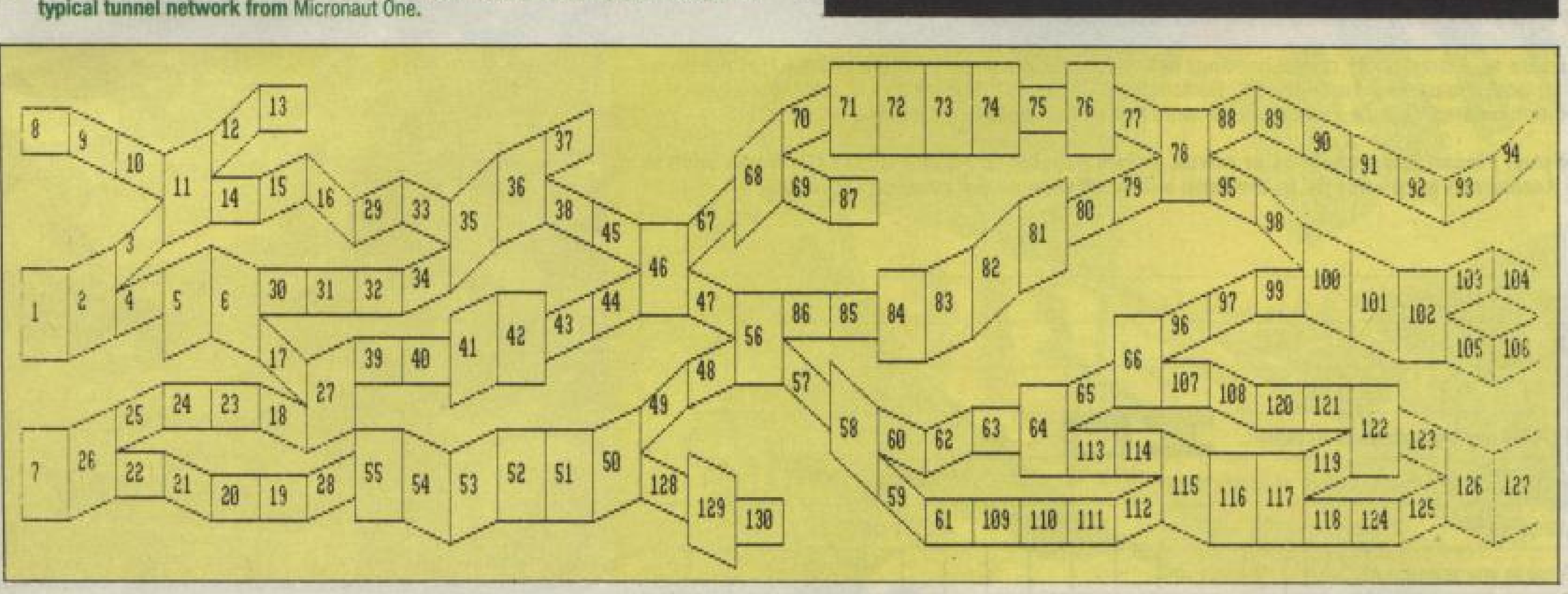
► **Creature feature: calling up the Predator Information screen reveals low-down on the Scrim. As Nexus would say; 'I'd larva babysham'.**



► **And here's one that we prepared earlier: a fully grown Jellyfly 'legs' it down the corridor after getting an electric pulse up its backside.**



► **A CRASH EXCLUSIVE! Even before the game's finished, we bring you The Map! A typical tunnel network from** Micronaut One.





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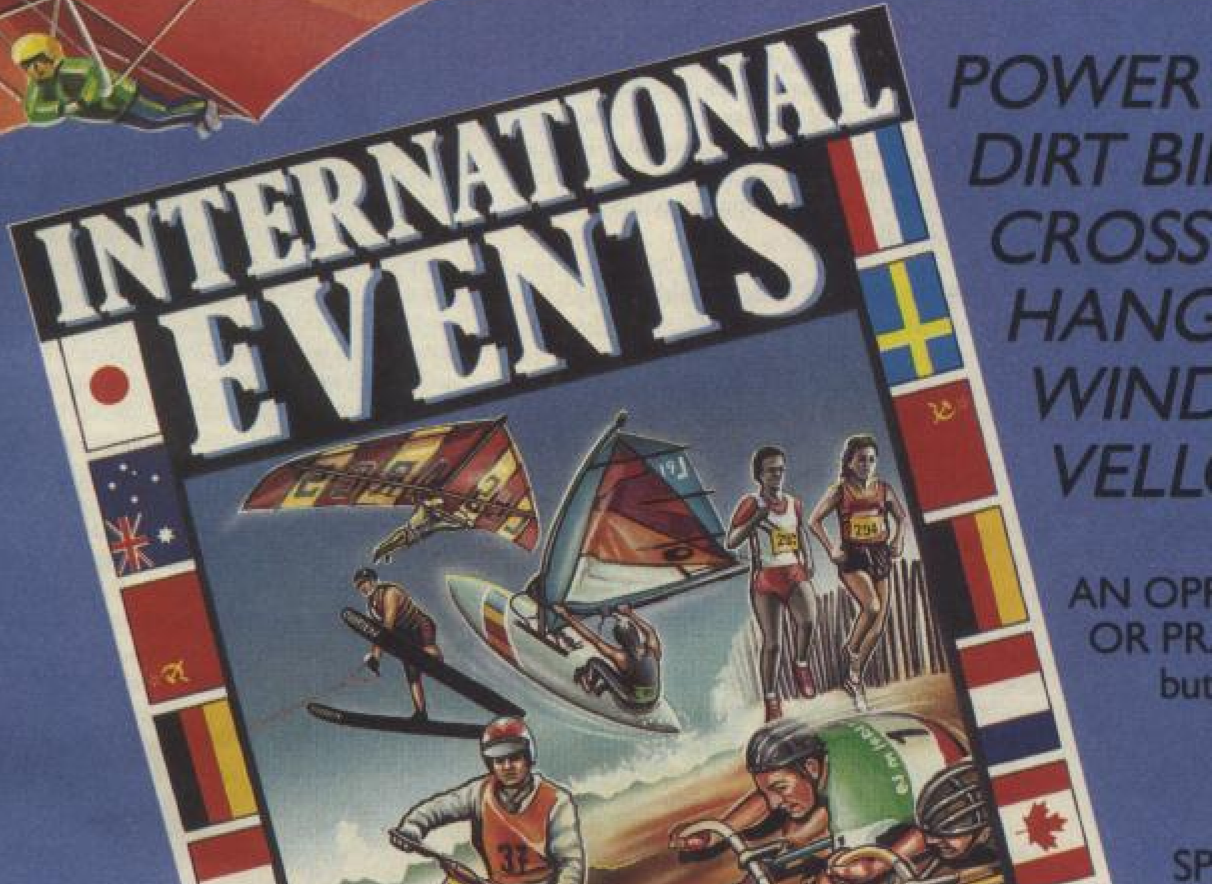
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My old pal #007 has been put in charge of Tamara, while I rot here in the nether regions of despair, as we teleport to our trainee assignment on behalf of Macdonalds Intergalactic. The Corporation Wars have been raging for centuries now, and we are trying to prevent the Cocacolonisation of the planet Kashdispensa, formerly Earth, by setting up a planetwide system of microwave vending machines. Personally, I think the idea is asinine, as there are no humans on Kashdispensa whatsoever, but then I'm not paid to think. I'm not paid at all. Unless you count these weird bits of paper signed by the legendary Krey Twins, Oliver and Franco, servants of the dreaded Lord Sendusa Fax.

This planet is incredibly ugly. Duane fits in perfectly. Its entire surface is covered in plasticrete, whose entire surface is covered in graffiti, and its entire population consists of vending machines. There are squillions of them. Chocolate bar dispensers in what used to be Switzerland, Softee-Ice nozzles all over some place named Napoli, fag machines in San Francisco, whereas here in a forgotten, damp little corner called Britain, there's nothing but utterly useless gambling devices. Apparently it all began long, long ago, when your mytholgical goddess Maggot Hatcher demanded impossible sacrifices from her worshippers. After selling off things like gas, oil, telephone conversations, justice, health and air, she dispensed with people altogether, replacing them with much more efficient machines. And these machines were happy as Larry, trading in bits of paper signed by the Krey Twins, which had no real value, and voting for the goddess Hatcher in a peculiar sexual rite called a General Erection. Larry wasn't too happy, mind. He was turned into hardcore, and the phosphorous from his brain became part of the random number generator circuit in a Bingo machine.

"Here I am, the most intelligent entity on this entire planet and my prime function is as a bog attendant"

I expect you are wondering why I haven't mentioned going to the toilet yet. After all it is the most common motivator in every episode so far. Apart from gratuitous sex and violence. Well how can I disappoint you, here goes, it's toilet time again. Duane Pipe has two legs, one beneath each of his scaberous buttocks. These legs are gooseberry-haired stumpy columns which bow outwards like a pair of curled brackets either side of a very small percentage symbol. It is this part of his anatomy which he clutches as he hops from one gooseberry-haired stumpy leg to the other. As I tell this telling tale to you he is ripping loose a buttock blaster comprising 17% sulphur dioxide, 24% methane, 11% politician and 48% cruelty to underclothing. "Pooh!" says Tamara. I curse the armaments designer who equipped me with scent analysis I curse my revolting pimply host for jiggling about and making me feel queasy as a vegetarian in a French kiss and I curse forty four word sentences without any punctuation in them. The idiot boy is asking me where the nearest wee-wee house is. Imagine it, here I am, the most intelligent entity upon this entire planet and my prime function is as a bog attendant. And what is worse, I don't know the answer.

"Try that machine over there, Duane, you incontinent little rat." I direct him to one of the more abused wall dispensers. "This don't look like a urinal" he whines. "It's too far off the ground." "Then stand on tip-toe, and aim high. And hurry up before all this lavatorial effluent is sub-edited out." There is a sign above the wall-machine, in flaking ancient English, but some of the letters have been erased yet the March of Time over passing centuries, not to mention the shoddy workmanship of Di Young, an itinerant Welsh Letrasign adherent, who lived to be 86, and spend the twighlight of his days addicted to the glue on the back of the letter 'K'. The sign reads 'ACCES-C--D--ASH-D-SPEN-ER'. Naturally for a being endowed with my great intelligence, it takes me a nanosecond to computer that this machine is a bodily waste disposal unit, of the disintegrator beam type, common in the Armitage-Shanks Nebula. The sign must have originally read 'ACCESS CRUD SLASH DISPENSER', in that charming directness beloved of the ancient Britons.

"All those years of Macdonalds potty training are about to pay off . . . "

"But I don't know how to use it Louse, and I'm bursting! Come on, you're supposed to be my personal advisory unit, so advise me, and hurry up!" Tamara is walking away in disgust, and what a stinking gust it is, in the general direction of serried ranks of fruit machines. My heart aches the further she retreats from Duane's stink. I had better advise him fast before I lose sight of my wonderful heroine. "Just read the instructions, Duane, these computerised urinals always have a display screen and a keypad to help idiots like you." He jiggles about in front of the Slashpoint, and sure enough, its protective glass front panel is sliding upwards to reveal my predicted screen, keypad, and a couple of functional looking slots. I just hope that all those years of Macdonalds potty training are about to pay off. The machine springs to life and issues its first instruction: 'INSERT CARD'. Duane is completely bewildered of course, not having the intelligence to master Ancient English, let alone to go to the toilet unaided.

Now I am advising him to put his identity card in the appropriate slot. I mean, the Brits can't have any old life-form voiding their bladders hereabouts, can they. He is inserting his card, and jiggling about with alarming force. 'ENTER PERSONAL ACCESS NUMBER' glows the instruction on the little monochromatic VDU. So that's what they called Privates in the old days! How quaint?! I have to explain this to the imbecilic Duane Pipe, who has the audacity to doubt my superior intellect before obeying the machine's command. 'KEY IN AMOUNT REQUIRED'. Duane actually manages to tap out 'Number Ones' all on his own. 'ENTER DEPOSIT OR WITHDRAWAL'. Well, gentle reader, there is no need for me to tell you exactly what is taking place at this moment, but the machine is flashing up its chemical analysis of Duane's deposit with the simple verdict 'MALFUNCTION', which I can certainly confirm. His functions are rotten.

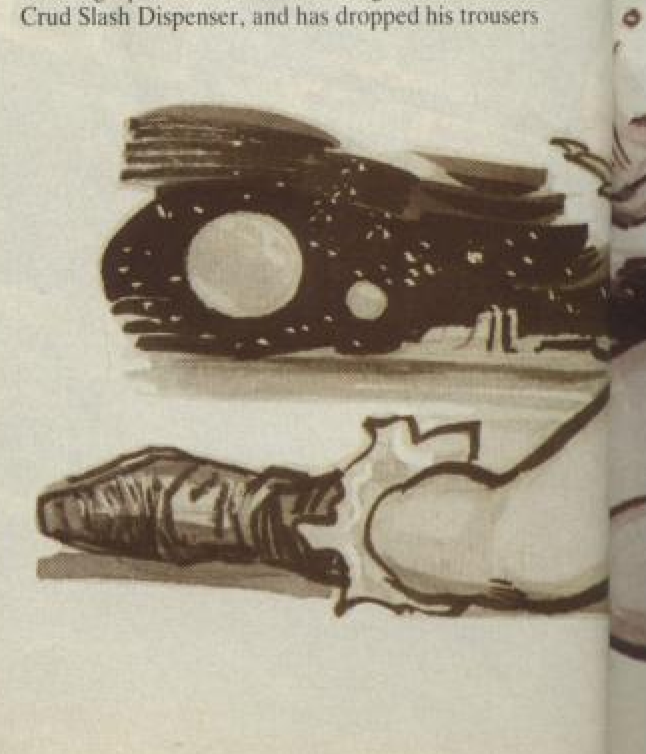
Duane heaves "Ho", a satisfied sigh of relief, and turns away from the Access Crud Dispenser, but I am not letting him get away with that. "Young man!" I telepathically reprimand him, "Wash your hands at once! And shame on you, you dirty little beast. Look for the the soil dispersal beam before you indulge in nose picking or any other of your favourite foul hobbies!" Listen to him mutter obscenities under his breath, which also stinks. Watch him slouch back to the machine, round shouldered, squareheaded, bracket legged, the percentage symbol shrunk to an umlaut. If I had not discovered that God was nothing but an egocentric rock'n'roll Compact Disc half way through Episode Three, I would pray to him now for deliverance from this torture of forced symbiosis with a moron.

The cretin has managed to decipher the current message scrolling up the machines's weeny screen, which states that Duane must await a receipt for his deposit. Things must have been horrifically beaurocratic in late Twentieth Century Britain if they gave receipts every time you went wee wee. As Duane waves his hands in front of the horizontal hand-cleanser slot, several small paper towels are ejected from it. How incredibly primitive! They are rather shiny and I would thought them unsuitable to absorb surplus moisture, but they are quite pretty, imprinted with ancient runes and portraits of domestic gods. "Who's this 'orrible looking git on the towels, Louse?" asks Duane, in that charming snivel of his. I analyse the portrait, and search my prehistoric history data banks. Naturally I am able to answer, "His image coincides with a two-dimensional representation of The Duke of Wellington, a great British war leader." "Yeah?!" sneers Duane, blowing his nostril contents into the little kerchief, "Well if he's so great, how come he wound up in the paper towel racket? Trooommmphk!!"

"Queen Elizabeth was never in the paper towel racket. She was in extortion"

I must admit that I cannot respond to this question, although my memory banks inform me that the lady wearing the metal hat on the other side of the towel was known hereabouts as Queen Elizabeth Aye-Aye. Queen Elizabeth was never in the paper towel racket. She was in extortion. I have some fascinating info on her sister too, whose favourite pastime involved ultra violet light, body lotion and a rubber . . . "Louse! Louse! I wanna go Number Twos now! How can I use this stupid toilet when it's half way up the wall!? Louse? Help me Louse, I wanna go Number Twos!" Tamara has got bored with the fruit machines and wanders over, only to flare one perfect nostril, deliver the word "Pooh", which happens to be the only syllable that has escaped her lips for two episodes, and retreat to a corner full of chewing gum machines, whose flaking brand name reads F-ATHER-IGHT.

I am categorically refusing to help Duane Pipe any more. Let him work out his Number Twos himself. I will not abase my intellect any lower that it has already sunk, even though my host is awkwardly climbing up on the little metal ledge of the Access Crud Slash Dispenser, and has dropped his trousers



to facilitate the screen's 'ENTER DEPOSIT AMOUNT' request. I am not going to warn him about the anti-vandalism protection built in to the machine. Let him find out for himself.

There is an ominous whirring of gears from within the wall cavity, and my smoke registers an interesting combination of silicon fusion and catalytic dung. What is about to happen gives a whole new meaning to the word disaster, with the insertion of the letter 'r' after the 'a' and an 'e' after the 's'. The glass protection panel slices downwards with a smoothness and rapidity reminiscent of the guillotine, but this is no time to lose your head. Duane's eyes widen in reverse proportion to his newly streamline backside, and as I fall to the cracked pavestone of ancient Earth, still disguised as a buttock boil, I am observing a sight that will haunt me for the rest of my life, or until the end of the next paragraph. Whichever comes the sooner.

"The last thing which is recognisably Duane Pipe is his dislodged right eye. A strange sight . . . "

The sixteen year-old living carcass of Duane Pipe is being sucked into the left-hand slot of the Dispenser, starting at the lower bowel, and unravelling like surprised spaghetti, from the inside out. The slot measures 55 millimeters wide by 2 millimetres high, and up until seventeen seconds ago, Duane was a normal round shouldered slob weighing 69 kilos. At this very moment his starboard kidney is doing beached fish impressions, flapping and leaping on the pavement, rather prettily in my opinion, and now disappearing down a gutter drain to begin a new career as a rat snack. His teeth are being expelled from the Duke of Wellington paper towel dispenser slot, and land neatly on top of each of the alphanumeric keys, in the sort of coincidence that will be familiar to readers of this story. His blood spurts from the Receipt Slot in a single arc of parabolic perfection, instantly being converted to one long sizzling black pudding, due to the fact that the slot glows white hot. For the first time since I have made his acquaintance the young man smells not unpleasant. The last thing which is recognisably Duane Pipe is his dislodged right eye. A strange sight, which now vapourises into a decorative spherical shower of tiny globules with a sound which is very similar to the ancient British word for intimate congress.

"The only gay neutron bomb in existence, due to his AC/DC converter being fitted back to front by an Austin-Rover robot with Altzheimer's Disease . . . "

The heat generated by this amusing incident is causing the buttock slice on which I am resident to sizzle more than somewhat, accompanied by the mouth-watering smell of frying bacon. Tamara wanders over and peers down at me, wrinkling her perfect nose, and uttering her inevitable "Pooh!". Hang on a second, I am receiving a message from Louse #007, which may prove critical to my entire future. While Tamara wonders if she should report the heresy of a slice of fried bacon on the pavement of a Macdonalds-only planet, #007 is telling me that he has fallen in love! This I cannot take! #007 has always been the only gay neutron bomb in existence, due to his AC/DC converter being fitted back to front by an antique Austin-Rover robot with Altzheimer's Disease, so how can he have fallen for my own true heart's desire, the incomparable Tamara Knight? If I was a human being I'd kill myself. As it is, I'll kill my former buddy #007.

"Don't be a silly-billy', warbles #007, "it's not Tamara that makes me go all weak at the interface, it's him over there!" He sends a microwave beam of delight in the direction of a fruit machine hanging on the opposite wall, which responds by waving its shiny chrome handle in a highly provocative yet pleasantly erotic manner. "Just look at his well-oiled gears, and those beautiful Nudge'n'Hold buttons, and when he spins his cherries, well #3.142, my atomic pile goes quite critical. You must help me, please! I want to take a chance on love, and Macdonalds can go take a flying fondle at a rolling doughnut!" I think I know what's coming next. Oh joy, oh bliss, oh Tamara, soon you and I will be one again.

#007 implants a low-level auto suggestion in Tamara's mind, and she picks up the hot slice of Duane from the pavement. Like a sleepwalker, she takes this pitiful remnant of my former host over to the one-armed bandit, who introduces himself as Lovely If Battered Electronic Random Access Client Entertainer, or LIBERACE for short, and thanks me from the bottom of his jackpot for the service I am about to render him and his new-found paramour. In less time it takes for a right eyeball to vapourise Tamara plucks #007 from her perfect skin, and pops him into Liberace's moistened coin slot. I have never seen such happy machinery in my artificial life, and I am sure that you will join me in wishing them a long and fruitful symbiosis together. May they respect one another, and always remember the words of the appropriately christened Francis Bacon, "It is impossible to love and be wise" (Essays, 1625 AD, Kashdispensarian, formerly Ancient British Earthling).

Now Tamara is picking me out of the congealed fat of what she thinks is a slice of smoked streaky, and holding me up for examination. "Tamara! My own sweet love, I have been waiting for this moment for sixteen years! At last we can begin our life together all over again! It's me, your own sweet Louse, ready to become your man with a smallish moustache and some leisureware." She peers at me, sniffs me, thinks for a moment, mutters "Pooh!", and with a disdainful flick of her perfect wrist towards the longest black pudding on the planet Kashdispensa, formerly Earth, she tosses me away.

DON'T MISS PART EIGHT OF THIS AWARD-WINNING SAGA (THE TYPESETTER WHO WROTE '24' INSTEAD OF THE MATHEMATICAL FORMULA FOR 'BALLS' IN EPISODE SIX IS NOW CONFINED TO A WARD), WHEREIN I INVENT A MACHINE WHICH IS GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOU DIE LAUGHING, AND TAMARA KNIGHT LEARNS A BRAND NEW WORD.

TO BE CONTINUED . . .



By Mel Croucher

And, yes, you turn the page and . . . what's this? There's no INVADERS FROM MARS game, surely . . . unless it's another zap-'em-up clone . . .

No, it's the first-ever CRASH video review. Well, there are two of them, actually – two recent releases you can go out and rent when you don't feel like running the GAUNTLET *yet again*. For a while.

You'll notice these videos reviews aren't structured quite like the CRASH game reviews. For one thing, there's no detailed synopsis; that's because the fun of a film often lies in finding out the plot, whereas in most games it's the playing rather than a suspenseful scenario that really matters.

And (to be honest . . .) we didn't have time to get CRASH's patent itemised comments out of these video reviewers before they left Ludlow for pastures new and adventures as yet undreamt of; they were writers on CRASH's former sister mag, LM.

Anyway, the background is, well, background; the important thing is what you think of these reviews, not just as opinions but as models for a future CRASH section. Is there room for videos in CRASH? Write and let Lloyd know – he'll pass the message on and, if your letters meet his exacting standards of logical reasoning and broad scholarship, publish a few comments in the FORUM.

And now, as they say in Ludlow Library, read on . . .



Frogs for dinner! Extraterrestrial turtles! It's an Invasion From Mars . . .

INVADERS FROM MARS

With **Timothy Bottoms** and **Karen Black**
Label: **Cannon**
Certificate: **PG**
Running time: **95 minutes**

When the Martians attack a small American town, it's up to a scientist's son to convince the local military that they have to do something – but it seems everyone he meets has been Martianised

" It's difficult to place Invaders From Mars. **Should we smile or shudder?**

It opens like an outtake from Close Encounters, **with the nuclear family watching meteors and the space-mad ten-year-old seeing worse; it becomes genuinely creepy as the aliens take over young David's parents, his teachers, and the local police (it's spookiness on the same theme as that subtly terrifying thriller** The Stepford Wives, **where you know . . . something's wrong with these people . . . but you don't know . . . what . . .).**

Then it goes plain preposterous when the aliens are revealed – far too early in the film – as absurd turtle creatures ('These things,' says David, 'they're huge ugly giant slimy Mr Potatoheads.')

And then it begins to drag as David persuades the local military base to storm the enemy spaceship ('We're not out of options yet,' the commander announces. 'Marines have no qualms about killing Martians!').

And it ends with a twist too corny to be taken seriously – It Was All A Dream, Or Was It?

But if you can stand the live-frog-eating scene – I THINK that's what it is, I heard it from behind my hand – then Invaders From Mars **is good for a few spine-chills and the gutsy performance of Hunter Carson as David, the kind of kid who says 'No, Dad, I know what ball lightning is. It wasn't that. It was something else. "**

BARNABY PAGE

" Having suffered Tobe Hooper's tedious Texas Chainsaw Massacre *and then his loathsome* Lifeforce, *I couldn't imagine him making a movie which would plumb deeper depths of absurdity – yet with* Invaders From Mars *he's done exactly that. Did this man really direct* Poltergeist? *Look out; this is for connoisseurs of the well and truly awful. "*

CURTIS HUTCHINSON

" There's nothing like a good invasion from Mars to cheer up David, the infuriating brat who saves the world in this film. There's too much of him and his unlikely wisdom, and not enough real terror – and the film falls completely apart when the Martians appear. *Invaders From Mars* is a missed opportunity, a cheap bit of sci-fi nonsense which wastes a few strong characters and scary scenes. "

TIM RICKS

CRASH rating 40%

THE MONSTER CLUB

With **Vincent Price** and **Donald Pleasance**
Label: **Channel 5**
Certificate: **15**
Running time: **93 minutes**

Take a fang-in-cheek gander at the despicably foul history of the Monster Club, a London niterie for those who can only go out at night . . .

" Vampire Erasmus (Vincent Price) invites distinguished horror writer Ronald Chetwynd-Hayes into the Monster Club to give him new material for his books. Erasmus tells the writer three stories of ghoulish goings-on, illustrated by short films with Donald Pleasance, Britt Ekland, Patrick Magee and others in brilliant cameo roles.

At the conclusion of his chronicle, Erasmus nominates Ronald for an honorary membership. To put down monster protests at Ronald being a 'Hume' (human), Erasmus explains that man is the most ingenious monster of all, having destroying millions of his own kind by the most devilish means in his short history.

Very profound, and VERY funny. "

SIMON POULTER

" Have you ever heard of a wereghoul, or a shadmock? Well, nor had I – but these are just two of the many monsters in The Monster Club.

This film – the most bizarre and outrageous I've ever seen – has a weird story line and atmosphere. Mixed with good special effects and music (compliments to UB40, John Williams and Expressos), these make it a pleasing (if not goreless) movie.

By the way, don't get excited when you get to the stripping – the well-proportioned body turns out to be a bloody skeleton! "

LAWRENCE WARRY

" This is a hilarious romp through some spooky stories with Vincent Price and his ghoulish guide. *The Monster Club*, ah, *possesses* an inspired plot with a wickedly twisted moral at the end. "

TIM RICKS

CRASH rating 70%


10··9··8··7··SUCCESS··6
5··4··3··2···FAILURE··
··THE DIFFERENCE IS··
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